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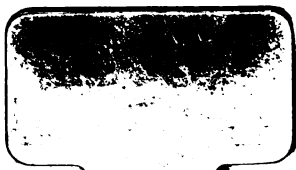
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Tossed on the Waves,

A Story of Young Life.

BY

EDWIN HODDER,

AUTHOR OF

"MEMORIES OF NEW ZEALAND LIFE," "THE JUNIOR CLERK,"
ETC., ETC.



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Chapter I.



"There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased,
The which observed, a man may prophesy
With a near aim of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life ; which in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie entreasured."

SHAKSPEARE.

" Life's great play
May, so it have an actor great enough,
Be well perform'd upon a humble stage."

MARSTON.

Master Harbey unfolds his Plans.

THE old clock with the deep bass voice had just struck four, and the school-house door was thrown open. "Good afternoon, Sir, good afternoon, Sir," said the youngsters to the schoolmaster, as they came out through the ivy-grown porch; and no sooner had they made their bows, and put on their caps, than off they started—some to the play-ground, to seize upon a vacant swing, some to run down the steep hill beside the church, and some to gather in little groups and propose games for the afternoon.

The elder boys were the last to leave the school, and as they came out with their bags of books over their shoulders, they did not, as the youngsters had done, rush off at once to some sport, but, joining arms, they all walked leisurely along across the green which lay between the school and the church, until they

came to a pretty wooded dingle, through which a clear sparkling streamlet ran, and when they had arrived at what seemed a well-known and well-loved spot, they seated themselves by mutual consent, still eagerly pursuing their conversation.

"Well, I'm pretty sure I shan't get it," said one boy, a real country lad, with hair which was not auburn. "I never got a prize yet, except once, and that was when I was at old Mrs. Hopkins's school, and I shouldn't have had it then if it hadn't been that there were only two other boys in the class, and one of them left before the breaking-up, and the other told the old lady he knew how to teach as well as she did, and so she took a disliking to him. No, I say Bob Amesbury will get the prize."

"Gammon!" said another boy, who looked very much as if he thought he should take the prize himself. "If Bob Amesbury gets it, I'll forfeit my Clapshaw bat, which came all the way from London last year. Why, where did Bob stand in class this afternoon? and where does he stand in class four days out of the five? Why, pretty nearly bottom; and it ain't likely he'll get top at the examination."

"You only say that, Lennett, because by a strange

chance you happened to be top of the class yourself this afternoon," said Edward Martin, a bright intelligent lad of about fourteen, who seemed to have as much sense in his little finger as Lennett had in his head. "You never lose a chance of making some nasty speech about Bob, and you know what you've just said isn't true. I think Bob Amesbury stands a very good chance of coming off A 1 ; but, no, I don't mean A 1, I think he will be B 2, for Charles Harvey has been working up no end for it, and I think he will carry off the prize."

"You're very complimentary, Ted," answered Charles Harvey, as he pulled a lock of his hair in mock reverence; "but I am too old a bird to be caught by your chaff. No, I have not half worked up for it; and here is Bob, who was always a better and more industrious scholar than I, he is cram full of information, and I can see by his quiet way that he means to go in and win. Eh, Bob?"

"Well, as far as that goes," answered Amesbury, "I do mean to have a good try for it, and if I can get it I will. It isn't for me to say who I think will get it, but I shouldn't wonder if you and I had a tough pull for it, Charley, and one of us carried off the book."

"That's it! that's it!" chimed in two or three, "it rests between Bob and Charley."

"But that shan't hinder me from having a try after it," said Edward Martin aside to another boy, whose eyes sparkled with hope as he answered, "No, and it shan't hinder me either. Every fellow ought to think he is going to be 'best man,' or else it's no use trying."

The conversation did not last very long. Boys who have been in school all the afternoon, are not much addicted to sitting down to long conversations when there are play-fields, with bats and balls at hand, and it would be very unnatural if they were.

"Who says cricket?" cried out one of the boys, and "I! I! I!" was answered briskly in half a dozen places at once. Up the wooded dingle, across the green, down by the school-house slope, away scampered the group, and in ten minutes wickets were pitched, coats were thrown off, and that glorious old game—as dear to grown men as it is to boys—commenced.

When the game was over, the boys gathered up their books, and started off for their homes. Some lived a good distance from the school, for it was

in an agricultural district, and the houses were scattered around for some miles. The village of Ryslip, where the school was situated, was an old-fashioned, picturesque place,—a very model village. There was the old church, with its ivy-mantled walls, and curious belfry, which for hundreds of years had been the glory of Ryslip; and there was the ruin of a monastery close by, where many a strange event had happened in the history of the English kings, if all the village legends were true. And there was the old well at which Cromwell's army slaked their parched tongues, as they returned from a battle which took place over in the fields yonder, where some huge stones are piled together in commemoration of the event. Down the grove of trees which led from the church, and beside the dingle where the schoolboys had been discussing the probabilities of the examination, was the Parsonage House. Its projecting gable windows, all overgrown with ivy; its thatched roof, covered with moss and lichen; and its large chimneys, which looked like towers, proclaimed that it was a house which had stood for many a long year in that tranquil spot. Perhaps, if the Parsonage House could have told its own story, it would have been able to

give many strange accounts of troublous times, and histories of generations lost in the long past. The villagers did say that the Parsonage was as old as the church, and one of the tombs in the churchyard bore the date of 1430 upon it, so the fair inference was that through many a stormy period of history, and through many a reign of persecution, the old Parsonage House had been the scene of strange events.

The scenery all round the village was very picturesque; the heights were covered with short sweet grass, where the shepherds tended their flocks; the valleys were rich with meadow pastures, where the cattle browsed; and away in the distance stretched the broad ocean. Many an ancient homestead was seen peeping through the thick woody hill-slopes, and the main street of the village, with the thatched and gabled houses, from which the upper windows often projected far over the lower rooms, and the quaint-looking shops, with little gardens in front, and roses climbing round the doorways, all told the same story—that Ryslip was an old-fashioned, quiet, countrified village.

But let us follow Charles Harvey down the winding road which led to Dell farm. His fine, manly face

was all aglow after the exercise of cricket, and as he ran along with his bat swung over his shoulder, he looked the very picture of health and strength. Vaulting over the stile which led to the house, and patting old Rover, who came bounding along with a bark of welcome to meet him, he soon reached his home.

"Well, Aunt Esther, up to your eyes at work again!" said Charles as he entered the room. "I declare you must be a great disappointment to Satan, for he never finds you with idle hands to do mischief for him."

"Ah!" said Aunt Esther, "it's well to have enough to do; there's plenty of people in the world who don't know how to make the best of the little time there is in this life. But Charley, boy, you shouldn't talk lightly about the temptations of Satan; it's a serious subject."

"Well, Aunt, I didn't mean to offend you. I thought I was paying you a compliment, and I know you like Dr. Watts, so I selected a quotation from him. But I can find another piece which will do as well. You are like the busy bee, which improves every shining hour by mending stockings and patching shirts, and doing everything in your power."

“Charles, my dear,” answered Aunt Esther, still as solemnly as before, and not at all disturbed by the hearty laugh of her nephew as he delivered his new version of the poetry, “bees do not mend stockings nor patch shirts. I do like Dr. Watts, as you say, and therefore I don’t like to hear what he wrote turned into ridicule. I wish you would try, my boy, to give up making fun of serious things.”

“Why, Aunt, it was only this morning, when we had such fun in getting the pigs out of the garden, that you wound up with the moral, ‘Religion never was designed to make our pleasures less,’” answered Charles, the suppressed smile still playing upon his face.

“Ah! boy, but chasing the pigs, you know, is not making fun of serious things. What I mean is, I wish you would leave off making fun of any words that are used in the Bible, or any good books like the Pilgrim’s Progress, or Dr. Watts’ Hymns. For every idle word we speak we shall have to give an account; and if we think lightly and speak lightly of things even connected with religion, it gives us hardness of heart, and is likely to do great harm to the truth.”

“Well, Aunt, I will put a stopper on my tongue,

and will be more respectful to poor old Dr. Watts," said Charles, and he kissed Aunt Esther on the forehead.

"Hasn't Father come in from work yet?" he asked, as soon as the little scene was over. "It is close on six o'clock, and about his time. He is another of the busy"—bees he was going to say, but he stopped short and substituted the word—"men. I really think I shall have to give up school and settle down to work soon, for everybody seems to be working but me."

"You do work, boy, and work hard, I hope, at school," answered Aunt Esther. "To all things there is a season, and now, in the season of youth, you work for knowledge. As Solomon says, 'With all thy gettings, get understanding;' but knowledge is a poor thing unless it is sanctified, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Charles was on the point of replying, and for aught we know was about to argue with Aunt Esther upon the passages she had just quoted, when old Rover started up from the floor, wagging his tail excitedly, as was his wont when he went to welcome his master home, and bounded from the room.

“Down, good dog; paws off, old fellow! Well, Esther, home at last, you see; the tea is not cold, I hope? You’ve got a real good colour, Charley, boy. Cricket I suppose, eh?—Ah! that’s right; a pair of slippers is a luxury after a hard day’s work;” and so saying Mr. Harvey, or Master Harvey as the neighbours called him, seated himself in a low arm-chair, and commenced the operation of unlacing his boots.

Aunt Esther lost no time in taking up the teapot from the hearth, where it had been set down before the fire to “brew,” and bringing the hot cake, which her own hands had made, from the oven. The trio drew up their chairs to the table, and when Aunt Esther had given thanks for the provisions before them, commenced the evening meal.

While they are enjoying it, suppose we just draw a pen-and-ink sketch of them. Mr. Harvey is a tall, fine man, about forty years of age, or perhaps a little beyond it, with a keen penetrating eye, and a bold broad forehead. Although so young, his hair is nearly grey, and if you look steadily at him you will see there are lines upon the face which do not look natural to a man in his prime. He wears the rough clothing of a working farmer, but any one

would say at a glance, "that man comes of a good old family, and beside that he is shrewd and intelligent." Yes, Master Harvey did come of a good old family. His great great grandfather had lived in Ryslip, and had held a vast amount of property there, but a succeeding generation had squandered much of it away, and all that remained was the farmhouse and surrounding land in which Mr. Harvey lived. Early thrown on his own resources, Master Harvey had not received the advantages of much education, but great natural ability, which he never lost an opportunity to direct into a useful channel, enabled him to pick up a good deal of learning of one kind and another, so that the neighbours looked up to him as "a scholard." The Reverend Mr. Woodbridge, of the Parsonage House, liked to lean over the railings as Master Harvey fed his pigs or watered his garden, and have long conversations with him on subjects which were "hid mysteries" to many of the wealthier and great men of the village. But how came those grey hairs on Master Harvey's head, and the deep lines in his face? Ah! it is a gloomy story, but a few words* will tell it. His wife, the mother of Charles, had been a sad sufferer, and after years of

living death, she passed into the world where sorrow and sighing flee away, about a twelvemonth before our story opens. It was a terrible blow to him, and he had never got over it. Aunt Esther, who had tended Mistress Harvey during her long illness, then took up her abode permanently at Ryslip, and a great comfort she was to them, not only in attending to the household cares, but in ministering comfort and consolation to Master Harvey in his troubles.

And now let us look at Aunt Esther, as she sits there making tea. She is a few years older than Master Harvey, but though there is often a sad and sombre expression on her face, yet it does not bear any wrinkles made by care, nor is her hair quite grey. She is dressed in a plain cotton dress, with a white apron, and a loose white frill round the throat. Her cap, though very plain and neat, shows a good deal of taste; in fact, at all times and in all ways Aunt Esther is a pattern of neatness. In very early life she was left homeless, through the death of both her parents, but a distant relative, a Wesleyan minister, took her into his house, and there she lived as one of the family until the death of her sister, Mistress Harvey. The neighbours always called Aunt Esther

Mistress Curtis, (and even more generally good Mistress Curtis,) although she was still a maiden lady. And a good soul she was; as true and thorough a Christian woman as ever breathed. But, like all of us, she had her peculiarities. In the home of Mr. Walters, the Wesleyan minister, she had been constantly living in an atmosphere of religion, and from her earliest years it had been her delight to strive in all ways, whether she ate, or whether she drank, or whatever she did, to do all to the glory of God. The words of inspiration became her household words, and so thoroughly was she versed in the Scriptures, that she was never at a loss to find passages for quotation suitable to any and every subject. To strangers this of course seemed very singular at first, but the singularity soon wore off, as they saw not the parade of piety, or a mere religion of words, but the deep, true earnestness of a holy and consistent life.

At the class-meeting Aunt Esther was as important as the leader, and many a weary and heavy-laden soul found rest and comfort as they listened to her words of earnest exhortation, or description of experience. Many a sick room had been made light and joyous through Aunt Esther's care, and many

with their dying breath had blessed God for her ministry.

But now let us look at Charles Harvey, and draw his portrait—that is if we can, for every minute the features shift; now the lips are compressed to hide the smile which some funny quotation of Aunt Esther has caused; now the features relax, and the whole face is in animation; now a hearty Ha! ha! rings through the room, and is echoed by the old rafters across the ceiling. Charles has a fine face of his own—frank, noble, honest. Every one who saw him felt, if they did not say it in words, “There is a youth with sense and pluck and purpose in him;” and if a painter had wanted a head for a study, to personify Truth, he could not have chosen a better subject than Charles. Master Harvey was proud of his son, and not without cause; although not quite seventeen years old, Charles combined with the sprightliness and mirth of boyhood an amount of sense and feeling which belonged to manhood. Through all his father’s troubles and anxieties he had shown a sympathy and discernment far beyond his years, and this produced a familiarity and confidence which is not often found between father and son. At school

Charles had always acquitted himself with credit; and Mr. Strangelore, the schoolmaster, had often been heard to say, "Charles Harvey is no ordinary boy, and mark my words, Sir, he will turn out something more than an ordinary man."

The evening meal over, Aunt Esther cleared away the tea-things, brushed up the hearth, spread the red table-cloth, and otherwise made herself useful, while Charles and his father strolled round the garden, visited the old grey mare in the stable, scattered a few handsfull of grain to the poultry, and chatted together all the while about the probabilities of harvest, and the thousand and one little matters of interest which are ever occurring in a farm-yard. Then when the twilight began to fade, they returned to the house, where Aunt Esther was sitting with a work-basket by her side, and her fingers rapidly stitching away at a frock which she was making for poor old Farmer Haycroft's wife, who was too much afflicted with rheumatism to ply a needle. Master Harvey took down a book from the well-stocked shelf, and Charles got out his bag of books and carefully looked over the lessons for the morrow. But had you watched Master Harvey closely you would have seen that he was not

reading; first he looked at Charles, then at Aunt Esther, and then into the fire, where he gazed with that abstracted stare which tells of intent thought and an oppressed mind.

Charles broke the silence which had reigned profoundly for more than half-an-hour.

"There! that's over, thank goodness!" he said, as he closed a book, "now Mr. Strangelore may dodge me about the lesson as much as he likes and I think I can keep him at bay."

"Are you pretty well primed for the examination," asked his father; "it will soon be coming off now I suppose?"

"Yes, father, next Thursday is the day, and I hope you will have the pleasure of clapping me on the back as I come down from the platform with the prize under my arm. But I'm more than half afraid Bob Amesbury means to get it. Isn't it a queer thing that Bob and I are always good friends together and yet we are constantly contending for the mastery? At the boat-race he got the better of me; last year he shot ahead of me by a few marks at the examination; and in dozens of ways he has shewn himself to be my evil genius."

“ I question that,” answered Master Harvey ; “ it is the work of a good genius to stimulate to exertion and provoke emulation. More than half the pleasure of a victory is to have a sharp contest for it. For my own part I would rather be beaten in a race of any kind by a good opponent who kept up shoulder to shoulder with me, than I would arrive first at the goal without much exertion and leave the other racers lagging in the distance.”

“ Well, father, I don’t know but what it is best,” answered Charles ; “ but it is rather hard to be always second-best man when everybody says we are so evenly matched. I wonder whether it will always be so ? When Bob Amesbury and I are both men, I wonder whether I shall be Bob’s inferior ? But, there, one can’t calculate upon the chances of the future.”

“ There are no chances in the future,” said Aunt Esther, looking up over her spectacles. “ Not a sparrow falls without His knowledge ; and if He makes a path for us, He will guard our way through it by His providence, so that no chance shall happen to us. But, Charley boy, it is a strange thing to hear you talk of the future at all. Youth generally thinks only of the present.”

"Aunt, I feel sure you are mistaken," said Master Harvey; "perhaps young people do not talk much of the future, but I believe they think a great deal about it. Some of my earliest recollections are connected with my thoughts of what I should be when I grew to be a man."

"I know I very often think of the future," said Charles, "and wonder where my lot will be cast and what it will be. And, father, I have thought a good deal about it lately, and have wanted to talk to you about it. You know I am just upon seventeen years old,—the oldest in the school, or nearly so, although folks say I don't look it; and I ought to be settling to something now. If I am to be a farmer, don't you think I ought to give up school after the examination, and begin to help you more than I have done?"

Charles spoke in the nervous, excited manner in which young people generally speak when they are telling something which has been a secret with them for a long time. Aunt Esther again looked up from her work, and Master Harvey shut the book he had been pretending to read, and drew his chair closer to the table.

“Charles, you are a queer fellow,” he said; “and I think sometimes that you can read my thoughts, for you often talk to me upon the very subjects I have purposed to talk to you. I have got a scheme in my mind about your future, my boy, and my own and Aunt Esther’s, and only to-night when I came in from the yard, I resolved to tell it to you.”

“Out with it, father!” said Charles, his eyes sparkling as he thought that all the future was about to open before him.

“I hope, John, you have committed your plans unto the Lord,” said Aunt Esther, “and in whatever scheme you have before you, you see the leading of His providence?”

“I hope so, Esther; but I know we often make our plans and then ask God to show us His providence. But let me tell you what my plan is. Ryslip isn’t what it was when I was a boy. The railway has done us mischief; and one thing and another has helped to make times bad for us here. You know that this little farm we are on is only part mine; I have been obliged to mortgage some; and I don’t see how to keep my head above water in paying my way unless I raise more money upon it. And you know

Squire Thornton is always talking to me about selling it to him; and I have thought that it is now hardly enough to keep us, and it won't make anything for Charles when he grows up; and so my plan is to part with the old place and go away to Australia, where there is room enough for all, and good prospects for young folks, and start afresh there."

Had Aunt Esther been told that a great earthquake had swallowed up the city of London, or that Queen Victoria was going to make the Parsonage House her country residence, she could not have been more surprised than when she heard Master Harvey's plan; and had Charles been told that he was to be made Prime Minister, or Archbishop of Canterbury, he could not have been more delighted.

"I haven't determined upon this hastily," continued Master Harvey, "but it has long been upon my mind—ever since poor Jane died. The old place will never be the same old place to me again without her, although you have done all that could be done, Esther, to make up for her loss, and may God reward you! I think it will be for Charles's good, and for mine, and perhaps the sooner it is all settled the better; but, Esther, I don't know what you will think

about it. Do you think you see your way clear to joining us there some day ?

“John, I must not give a reply one way or the other,” answered Auut Esther, “until I have spread the matter before the Lord. God’s will be done! If His providence says, ‘Get thee out of thy country into a land that I will show thee,’ then it will be my duty to go; but if not, He will provide for me here.”

“Well, Charles, what do you say to it?” asked his father.

“Say to it! why, that it is a splendid scheme, father; and if you had asked me to choose all the occupations in the world, I should have chosen going to Australia to make my way rather than anything else. Ryslip against the world, father! You and I will work like Trojans in that glorious land which flows with milk and honey, and in almost no time we shall be rich and prosperous, and then you shall retire and I will carry on the work. Hurrah for Australia! Father, when do we start?”

Hour after hour rolled away, and there was not an instant’s cessation in the conversation. Charles could not control his fancy, and he drew picture after

picture of colonial life, and devised thousands of plans which were far more interesting than practical. Aunt Esther toned down the conversation by many wise and judicious remarks, and Master Harvey unfolded the details of his plans. Harvest would soon be ready, and then when he had gathered it in, he proposed to leave. Charles was to leave school after the examination, and help him on the farm; and with regard to Aunt Esther, if she could see her way clear to accompany them, he would only be too glad, but if not, when they were settled in Australia perhaps she might be prepared to join them there; and in the meantime there was her old home at Mr. Walters', where she would at once be gladly received again.

All were startled by hearing the old church clock strike twelve, a sound quite unfamiliar to the ears of that steady-going little party.

"Aunt Esther," said Master Harvey, as he reached down the family Bible, "late as it is we must not separate until we have read and prayed together over our plans. And may God order them all for us."

Aunt Esther was always the chaplain of the house,

for it was only very recently that Master Harvey had known or cared for the things which are of God, and he had never yet, even in the home circle, ventured on engaging in prayer. Aunt Esther, from her long connexion with the Wesleyans, and more than that from her long intercourse with God, was "at home" in prayer and mighty in the Scriptures, and night after night she read and expounded the Word to them, and then led them to the throne of grace where she ever had freedom of access.

Turning to the xxxviith Psalm, she read selections from it, dwelling upon these passages—"Trust in the Lord." "Delight thyself also in the Lord." "Commit thy way unto the Lord." "Rest in the Lord. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in His way."

And then as they all knelt down, Aunt Esther besought God for a blessing. "O! God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, order all things, we beseech Thee, to work for our good. Let the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, guide us in all our paths. Guide us, oh thou great Jehovah, and whatever road it may be on earth, may its

end be heaven. Keep us always as the apple of
Thine eye, stretch over us Thy shadowing wings,
hold up our goings that our footsteps slip not,
and lead us into the way everlasting, through Jesus
Christ."



Chapter II.



“ For he was one in all their active sport,
And like a monarch ruled their little court ;
The pliant bow he formed, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labour all.”

CRABBE.

“ We still have slept together,
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled and inseparable.”

SHAKSPEARE.

A Ryslip Gala-day.

THE grand event of the year at Ryslip was the School examination and breaking-up treat. To do any manner of work on that day was accounted as an unpardonable offence. Old and young, rich and poor, all united to make it the most memorable among the red-letter days—and this year the affair promised to go off with more than usual brilliancy. Early in the morning a merry peal sounded from the old church belfry, announcing that Ryslip was to prepare itself for the excitements of the day. Above the belfry a pole was raised, and the time-worn flag which had done good service to generations dead and gone, waved as gallantly as its age would let it. All the shops were closed, and instead of meat hanging out at the butcher's doorway, large festoons of evergreens supplied its place; on the barber's red and white pole

a banner was unfurled; the grocer had taken away the plums and ginger, and the cheeses and sides of bacon, and had put gallipots filled with sand and mould candles in the centre before each pane of glass, ready for an illumination in the evening; old Mr. Churchill, the sexton and undertaker, had taken away the funeral plates out of his window, and put large bunches of beautiful gay flowers in their place. Late the night before and very early in the morning grand goings-on had taken place at the School. Never had the decorations been finer. The old porch was one mass of evergreens, and no end of flowers were intertwined among the branches. The angle of the porch was mounted with a cluster of flags and banners, and a transparency in the centre crowned the whole.

The actual engagements of the day commenced at ten o'clock, when a procession got in line at the school-house door. A brass band from the market town was engaged for the day. This headed the procession, then followed the boys of the School, some bearing banners, others bats and stumps, and all dressed in white trousers and coloured caps. Next came Parson Woodbridge in his robes, Squire Thornton and some of the gentlemen farmers on

horseback, and the Ryslip Cricket Club brought up the rear. All through the village, as the procession passed along, loud and hearty cheers greeted them, and then the villagers all fell in, and when they reached the cricket-fields, where the marquees were pitched, all Ryslip had assembled. The boys' ground was marked out and their wickets pitched first, and then the club retired to a piece of ground further off and made preparations for their match. It was a glorious morning, not a cloud was in the sky, and all nature seemed dressed in holiday attire. The seats in front of the marquee were all full, and numbers of people were sitting down on the grass. The boys, all fresh and trim for the day's exploits, were running about the ground, their white shirts and trousers, and the blue and white caps distinguishing the sides in the match, glistening in the sunshine.

At length the game fairly commenced; Bob Amesbury was the leading man on the white cap side, and Charles Harvey on the blue. There was very spirited play on either side, and loud and hearty cheers greeted the boys who distinguished themselves in the game. But Bob Amesbury's side was the

stronger and better trained, and general opinion said that the white caps would win.

"Now, Harvey," said Sam Lennett, as he ran across to Charles, "we all look to you to bring up the score, old fellow. Go in and win, and take the shine out of Amesbury; he deserves to be licked."

"Not he, Sam; he deserves to win for he is playing well," said Charles.

"Now comes the tug of war!" said the blue caps, as Charles came up with his bat.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried they all, and loud clapping of hands came from the bystanders, as Charles met the first ball with a bold, steady swing, and sent it flying far beyond the outposts.

Parson Woodbridge walked up to Master Harvey, who was sitting beside Aunt Esther, and said, "Now, Master Harvey, that noble young fellow of yours has only to keep cool and the tables will turn on the white caps. How well he handles a bat! and really I do not know what he does not do well. I was having a long talk with him—look! there goes the ball again. Bravo! three more runs at least—the other morning, and I was really surprised at his intelligence. You have cause to be proud of him,

Master Harvey, and I hope—there! how cleverly that was blocked!—he will be through life all that he promises."

The interest of the game now stopped all private conversation. Even Aunt Esther put down her knitting to watch the play more intently. "Bravo, Charley!" "Good again, Harvey!" "Stick to it, old fellow, and don't wind yourself!" were the friendly counsels given by the boys on Harvey's side. Bob Amesbury and the white caps began to tremble for their chances. "Now Amesbury, straight at the wicket!" "Now you fellows, take a wider range!" "By George, there's the ball bang across the field again!" Such were the exclamations on all sides. And Charles Harvey stood at the wicket, with his hand as steady as the bails, and his eye as quick as lightning, catching the course of the ball as it came up to him, and then, as it sped away, making the runs with all the ease in the world. And when he had stood his ground until all the remaining men on his side were out, and the game was declared in favour of the Blues, he carried out his bat, and the white caps chaired him on their shoulders to the tent, amid shouts of "True Blue for

ever!" And it was a proud moment in the life of Charles, as he came up amid waving of handkerchiefs and clapping of hands, and received from the hands of Squire Thornton a splendid Clapshaw bat, to be henceforth the property of the True Blues.

By this time it was one o'clock, and the programme of the day was that the sports should be adjourned until the evening. At Three o'clock the examination was to take place in the school-house; and after the distribution of prizes, a tea was to be provided, and then leaping, wrestling, racing, and other amusements were to occupy the remainder of the day.

"Will the captain of the Whites join the captain of the Blues at dinner to-day?" said Mr. Harvey to Amesbury, "and then they can both start together for the school-house in the afternoon."

"Thank you, Sir, I shall be very glad to do so," said Amesbury; and he and Charles walked off together, followed by Mr. Harvey and Aunt Esther.

"Well, Bob, luck has run in my favour to-day, and, for the first time, I have beaten you," said Charles.

"Luck hadn't so much to do with it, though, as good play. You did play first-rate, Harvey, and I

never felt better pleased at being beaten, because we fought well for it, and it was a clean case of honest beating. But how about this afternoon?"

"Ah! that's a mystery of the future, Bob, and I know no more about it than I did about the result of our match when I went on the field this morning. I should like you to carry off the prize, and yet, of course, I'd rather carry it off myself; but I tell you what, we'll sit together when the distribution takes place, and if your name is called first, I will pat you on the back, and say, 'Well earned.'"

"And if you are called first, I will do the same for you," replied Amesbury.

"Do you know, Bob, I feel different to-day than I ever felt before in my life," said Charles, after a pause. "It is my last day as a Ryslip schoolboy. I have, perhaps, played the last game of cricket I shall ever play in England; this afternoon I shall take my chance of a prize for the last time; and then it seems as if I were going into a different state of being—as if I were going to take a jump from boy-life into man-life."

"I should like to change places with you, Harvey," answered Amesbury, "and ever since I heard of your

going to Australia, I have felt quite envious of you. May you come off in all your battles in life, though, as well as you have to-day. I shall miss you terribly when you're gone. You and I have been like brothers; and though, as you were saying to me the other day, we have always striven one against the other in sport and study, still we have always thought alike, and acted alike, and helped one another. And we have seemed as if we should keep on, all life long, the same; and now see what a change comes!"

"Yes; and the future, Bob? What will it be? Shall we ever meet again, and strive together in the business of life, as we have in our school duties? I should like to know the future; not to know all the way step by step, but just to look at a few places in the great journey."

"It is a good thing, perhaps, we can't see what is before us," answered Bob; "but there is one thing that always puzzles me, and that I should like to know, more than all the rest. What shall I be? A dull, heavy man, like Farmer Brookland, or a sprightly, active, useful man, like Mr. Rickart, who comes round here to buy up produce? And how shall I

think and feel? Will the world be the same to us when we are men, as it is to us now we are boys?"

"I have heard Mr. Strangelore say the future is very often what we make it. Look at that poor, broken-down, drunken man, who lives at the Glebe House. I have heard my father say that once he was a handsome, clever gentleman, who was liked and respected wherever he went; and now who has a good word to say of him? Perhaps, though, when he was our age, Bob, he never calculated on his future being what it is; I suppose because he never thought it would be only what he made it."

"Aye, that is a case in point, Harvey. Will you or I ever be like that man? I suppose we can help it; and if we were to vow that we never would, do you think we could keep the vow?"

"That brings us to what Aunt Esther's view of the case would be. She would say, our own strength is not enough, and I believe she is right; although, as I feel at this moment, I think I could make such a vow in the strength of truth and honesty. Bob, let us make a vow to-day; it is a memorable day for us both, and I think I shall remember it as long as I live. Let us vow that we will struggle through life

for truth, honesty, and uprightness of heart before God and man; that we will live to become true men; and when we meet again—if we ever do on earth after our long separation,—let it be that each of us can say to the other, ‘This is the future which my fancy pictured when I was a boy; this is the future I have made, and I thank God for it!’”

Charles spoke excitedly. The events of the morning—the prospects of the afternoon—the further prospect of so soon leaving the home of his childhood—all helped to fill his mind with unusual emotions. But he spoke as he felt,—it was a habit of his—and he could say anything and everything to Bob, for they were of one heart in almost all things.

“Charles, I don’t like making vows,” said Amesbury. “Don’t you recollect some of the resolutions we made last New Year’s Day? and how many of them are broken! But we will talk about it again, and——”

“Here we are, lads!” said Mr. Harvey. “Why one would think you had got all the affairs of the State, instead of cricket-bats, on your shoulders; for we have caught you up, while you have been having your long yarn.”

"We have been planning about the future, Mr. Harvey," said Bob; "you are so soon going away, and then I shall have no one to spin long yarns with, and so we have been making our arrangements for years and years to come."

"The future is not ours," said Aunt Esther, "and we may not even boast ourselves of to-morrow. All our times are in the Lord's hands, and we need take no thought of the future, what we shall eat or what we shall drink——"

"No, aunt, but what we shall *be*," interrupted Charles.

"Be!" said Mr. Harvey, "both of you be as men what you have been as boys; and for the great purposes of life, bring out the spirit of this morning's game, nerve and courage strained for the mastery, and press toward the prize. But come along in-doors, we must have some dinner."

The school-house was crowded in the afternoon. On the platform, which was gaily decorated, sat the Rev. Mr. Woodbridge, Mr. Strangelore, and the "gentry," who were specially invited. The examination was as gratifying as most school examinations

are. The boys were asked all the out-of-the-way questions which could well be put to them, and answered them correctly, to the surprise of the examiners. Puzzling sums were given them, which those who gave were unable to check on paper in half the time the boys were able to give the answers "out of their own heads." Then followed some recitations, which, of course, tended to immortalize Shakspeare in the memory of the villagers; and a few Latin speeches, which everybody enjoyed most, because they did not understand more than a word here and there, concluded the examination.

At last came the distribution of prizes. The mysterious pile on the table was uncovered, and a row of handsomely-bound volumes was seen.

"Will Charles Harvey come forward to receive the first prize?" said Mr. Woodbridge.

A long and loud round of applause burst from all; for Charles was a general favourite in the village. Bob Amesbury, true to his word, patted Charles on the back and whispered, "Bravo, old boy! now there is something for you to remember Ryslip by."

The blush of honest pride and excitement lighted up the handsome countenance of Charles, as he stood

on the platform and received from Mr. Woodbridge a very beautiful volume of "Longfellow's Poems," with his name engraved on the first page, and the signatures of "S. Strangelore and J. Woodbridge." Beneath the signatures was an engraved motto, "Life is real, life is earnest."

After complimenting Charles on the exemplary conduct he had displayed in striving for the highest place in the school, Mr. Woodbridge said :—

"I cannot let this opportunity pass without making reference to your departure from this village. It is a source of regret to us all. Your worthy father will be missed very greatly, for he has ever been one of the most active and useful men amongst us, ready and willing to promote every good word and work. And we shall miss you, Charles. Though young, your influence has been great ; and I know, from personal observation, combined with the testimony of our valued friend Mr. Strangelore, who has always taken a deep interest in you, that you have set a worthy example to your young friends of true boyhood. I do not say this to flatter you, but to help you in your life-purposes to attain the highest earthly position—a pattern of true manhood. 'Life is real,

life is earnest,' and you are just stepping forth into its realities. I think this period is very often the crisis of a life. You have had many advantages—a good home, good influences around you, a good education. How will you use them all? Resolve never to lose your self-respect or manly dignity. Yield to no man in what your conscience tells you to be right; preserve through manhood, as you have through boyhood, unswerving truth and honesty. Whatever you undertake, persevere in; have a worthy ambition to do all that you do *well*; and remember that, as 'no man liveth to himself,' it is your sphere to try and exert a useful influence around you, and make the world—your particular world—happier and better. And now, my friend, just one word more. Life here is worth living for, and struggling hard to improve; riches and honour are worthy of honest toil; but there is a life incomparably higher for which we have to live, and riches and honour which never fade away. 'Remember *now* thy Creator in the days of thy youth, *while the evil days come not.*' Now, with real, earnest life opening before you—now, before evil days cast their dark shadows round you—now, while all your energies are fresh

and vigorous—remember that Great Parent who loves you, and will make your path shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. All your resolves, all your purposes, commit to Him, and carry out in His strength; then, wherever you go, though it be across the trackless ocean which rolls between here and your destined home, or the still river which separates this world from the next, wherever you are you will be kept and preserved by Him; and at last, when the Father's Home is reached, you will join those you love never to be separated again. I need not tell you that you have all our good wishes for a safe and prosperous voyage. God bless you, Charles Harvey!"

The boys all rose and gave a hearty cheer, which made the old rafters of the school-house ring again, as Mr. Woodbridge concluded his address; and as Charles came down the steps from the platform with the prize in his hand, there was a buzz of congratulation.

Was it unmanly of Charles that, as he stood on the platform and listened with rapt attention to the address, the tears glistened in his eyes, and then rolled down his face? No; every boy in the school

knew that Charles was bravery itself, and the most manly fellow in the village; and his wet cheeks and red eyes, as he came down bearing the prize, were not thought to be a token of unmanliness by one person in the room. Nay, there was Ned Martin, who was as sorry to part with Charles from the school as he would have been to part with his own brother, and his eyes had glistened, and the tears had trickled down his face; and when he looked round, more than half ashamed, to see if anybody had noticed him, he saw Tom Benson trying to brush off a tear with his jacket-sleeve; and so tears became sympathetic, and many frank, honest boys, who would have been ashamed to do anything unmanly, had an unwonted sparkling in the eyes, and if it had not happened that Mr. Woodbridge concluded when he did, and so gave them an opportunity of expressing their feelings by a hearty cheer, they would have had to brush away tears too.

When Charles took his seat again, was it strange that Bob Amesbury had no word for him? No; Bob felt he couldn't speak; but he shook hands with Charles with a warm, hearty pressure which spoke more than words.

When all the prizes had been distributed, and more speeches made, the meeting came to an end amid loud cheers from the boys, and much merriment and good humour among all. And then followed the sports.

There was only one incident in the day that threw a partial cloud over the proceedings. As Bob was walking with Charles and some of the elder boys up to the gymnasium, to compete for prizes in the athletic sports, Samuel Lennett joined them.

"Well, Mr. Amesbury," said he, with a sneer, "pride must have a fall; you didn't get the prize, and the white caps didn't win the match."

Bob turned crimson, and his lips quivered with rage.

"We can't all be winners, Sam," he said, struggling to take things quietly, "you have not distinguished yourself very remarkably either."

"Oh no, I make no pretensions. I know my deficiencies, which *some* people don't."

"Now, Sam Lennett," said Bob, with his hands clenched, and his eyes flashing, "I'll tell you what it is; if you can't give up your unnatural spleen to-day, I'll give you something that'll make you remember it for some while."

"Oh, yes! you can crow, Bob, we all know that; you crowed about the prize and——"

A blow from Bob, straight from the shoulder, and delivered with full force, sent Sam Lennett reeling a yard or two till he measured his length on the ground.

"Now, if you want cause for quarrel," said Bob, as his opponent rose, "come on." But Lennett was not disposed for any more, he saw at a glance that all were against him, and there was a fire in Bob's eye which cowed the dastardly bit of spirit he had.

"Give it him, Bob! let him have it!" cried several voices, and Bob seemed far from unwilling to comply with the general request.

"No, no," cried Charles Harvey, "give up; don't spoil the play like this. You pitiful scoundrel!" he continued, turning to Lennett, "think yourself lucky you're let off without a sounder thrashing; and breathe out another taunt to-day, and we'll see what the duck-pond will do to cool you. All the school will take part in the proceedings with pleasure."

Shouts of approbation greeted Charles's speech, and mingled groans and hisses followed Lennett till he was fairly out of sight, and so the matter was settled.

But we must not stay to follow out all the incidents of the day, or to witness the sports; let us follow Charles, in company with Mr. Harvey and Aunt Esther, from the fields when night has come on, and the day's excitement is over, to the comfortable old parlour in Dell Farm.

"There, Charley boy," said Aunt Esther, as she kissed her nephew on the forehead, "I have wanted to do that all the afternoon, but I thought you would not like it in public. God bless thee, lad! Oh, Charley, lay to heart all that the minister said, and with the same zeal with which you have struggled for this prize, press towards the mark for the prize of your high calling which is of God in Christ Jesus."

"This has been a grand day, Aunt Esther, I shall never forget it as long as I live," said Charles. "Thank you all for your good wishes. I wish I could tell you all the new, strange feelings which I have had through this day, but I can't; so the future must show whether they have produced what they ought."

"This has been a grand day for me too," said Mr. Harvey. "It did my heart good to hear what the

parson said about you ; and to hear all the kind, hearty wishes which everyone expressed for us all. I always foresaw it would be a hard task for us to go away from the old village, but I did not think I should feel it so much as I do."

"Nor I, father ; I have found to-day lots of people to be friends whom I thought to be quite indifferent about us, and those whom we have always counted our friends, I had no idea were half so dear to us as I see they are now we are to be parted from them."

"Well, I hope it is a right and wise step we are taking. Come, good folks, let us have some supper, and be off to bed. To-morrow we shall begin our work in earnest, and then in another week or two, Farewell !"



Chapter III.



"Judge before friendship, then confide till death."

YOUNG.

**"His eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible,
He wrung Bassanio's hand, and so they parted."**

SHAKESPEARE.

The Last Day at Dell Farm.

IT was the last day the little household of Dell Farm were to stay in Ryslip. With the morrow's sun Aunt Esther would be on her journey to the home of Mr. Walters, and Mr. Harvey and Charles would join the good ship *Montagu*. It was a strange day, full of sadness and merriment; now bidding adieu to some well-known friend; now cording up the boxes, and forcing some gay and lively joke to scare off painful thoughts. By eventide the last stroke of work was finished, and the snug little parlour, which for years had always looked so neat and tidy, was strewn with luggage all ready to be sent off by drays to the market town.

"Now let us be off to say good-bye in the village," said Mr. Harvey, and very soon the three were away in different directions, but all bound upon the same errand.

"We can't let you go off without seeing the last of you; by the time we're up to-morrow you will be gone, and so we have come to say good-bye, once more, and for the last time."

The door was opened, candles mounted in bottles were lighted, (for all the furniture was sold or packed away,) the boxes were brought down from the piles on which they stood and placed round for seats, and in five minutes all the company were in hard and earnest conversation.

"Come back, Master Harvey, if you don't see your way clear to a future in Australia, and it will be a gleesome day for Ryslip when you do," said Farmer Styles.

"Old Rover will know you twenty years to come," said Mr. Fairfield, to whose care the faithful old dog had been committed, "and he will be as glad to see you as he is sorry to part with you. I declare he seems as if he were going melancholy mad."

Aunt Esther, who had returned from her visits, and had joined the company, turned the conversation as time began to while away.

"Friends," she said, "perhaps to-night is the last time we shall ever look upon each other's faces

in the flesh, and we who have spoken oft one to the other may never have an opportunity of doing so again. Can't we now commend ourselves to the care of the Heavenly Friend who knows all our hearts, and all our love one for another, and who can keep us all by His power and bring us safe to His everlasting kingdom !”

“That is just what we have come for,” said old Mr. Edwards, the class-leader; and, as by mutual consent all knelt reverently down, his voice led them to the Throne of Grace.

Earnestly he prayed that the Lord would give the winds and waves charge concerning those who were about to leave their fatherland, that in the great waters they might see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep; and that He who had said to the tempest, “Peace, be still,” might be with them all the journey through, and that with Christ in the vessel they might smile at every storm.

Then Aunt Esther prayed; and oh, how earnest and passionate her prayers were, that both Charles and his father might live and die faithful to the cause of the Redeemer. And Mr. Harvey prayed, the first time he had ever offered up a prayer in

public, but his heart was so full he felt it must find expression in words. It was a solemn but a happy time, the last few hours, perhaps, that those friends would be together on earth, and how could the moments be more appropriately spent?

When they rose from their knees and the late hour warned them they must be off, there was real heartiness and warmth of friendship in those kind wishes and interchanges of farewell gifts, and as the hands were wrung and good-bye was uttered, many an eye glistened, and the "God bless you," was faint and husky.

There were sleepless eyes in Dell Farm that night, the excitements of the day, the prospects of the morrow, were too great for that quiet little household to take as a matter of course. Charles went up to his room and sat down on a box, he did not go through the ceremony of undressing and getting into bed; by his side was a beautiful Bible, a parting gift from Aunt Esther, and in the cover was a letter from Mr. Strangelore, full of farewell counsels. He began to read, but presently he started, as he heard footsteps outside under the window. "It's poor old Rover," thought Charles, "come to see the last of us;" but

he listened again and was sure it was not the footstep of a dog. The cattle and horses had all been sold, it could not be them. Charles did not know what fear meant, so he waited a minute or two patiently, to find out who or what it was astir below. Presently he heard a voice, almost in a whisper—

“Charley, are you asleep?”

“No;” answered Charles, putting his head out of window. “Who is it?” .

“I, Bob Amesbury. I can’t sleep to-night, and I thought very likely you couldn’t sleep, and so we might have one more stroll together.”

“I’ll be with you like a shot!” answered Charles; and lashing some cord to the heavy sea chest below the window, he mounted the sill and lowered himself to the ground, so that he might not disturb his father or Aunt Esther by going down stairs.

It was a beautiful summer night, the moon was shining brightly, and not a cloud was in the sky, as the two lads sallied forth towards the wooded dingle where we first saw them at the opening of our story.

“Charley, I have had such a singular dream, and I can’t forget it. So strange that I should have such

a dream, to-night; I was only asleep for an hour, and then I woke up and I couldn't get to sleep again, so I came round to see if you were as wakeful as I expected you would be."

"What was your dream, Bob?"

"Well, I didn't come to tell the dream; but I'll tell it you if you like.

"I dreamt that I was out at sea in a boat which I had made all by myself. It was fine and calm when I started, and I rowed along as comfortably as I should on a millpond. But the clouds gathered in a moment, a gale came on and lashed up the sea into a tempest, my boat was shattered by a wave, and I was floundering about in the water. Wave after wave dashed over me, and I was fast sinking when I saw you swimming through the water after me. You had got a life-buoy on, and seemed as safe in the midst of the waves as if you were swimming in the Dell Hole, where the boys bathe. 'Give me that buoy, Charley!' I screamed to you; but you said 'No! if I give up the buoy, I shall sink—take my hand, and I will swim with you to shore.' But I could not, every time I seemed coming near you a wave carried me away, and I felt all the symptoms of drowning, when you clutched me

by the hair, and striking out, you reached the shore and saved my life."

"A strange and unpleasant dream, Bob; and was that the end?"

"No; when I came to and opened my eyes, I was in a new world. The tempest had ceased, and the bright sun shone; there was no more sea, it had all disappeared, and there was a sound of great singing and rejoicing, which seemed to come from everywhere. I asked you what it meant, and you said, 'This is a great rejoicing day for your recovery; and then, just as I fancied the singers were coming up to me, I woke. There, you have the dream in full. Now what is the interpretation thereof?'"

"I am not a wise man, nor a prophet, Bob; and to me a dream is a dream, and nothing more, for the time is past now for dreams to teach us anything. But yours is certainly very curious, and if I were not in a melancholy mood, I would try to give an interpretation."

"You melancholy! Well, it's natural enough. Do you know, Charley,—this is a secret, mind,—I so envied you that I have been thinking of running away from home and going as a cabin-boy on board

some vessel, so that I might meet you over in Australia, and strive to work my way up in the world alongside of you. But I can't do it. Melancholy gets over me, and I suppose that's natural."

"Yes," answered Charles, "that's natural enough, but it is not natural that you should wish to break your mother's heart by running away. Your duty, Bob, is to stay at home, and if you shun your duty and start on the voyage of life in a boat of your own making, as you did in the dream, depend upon it the dream will come true and your hopes will all be wrecked. Oh, Bob, don't cherish such notions, battle with them, fling them from you, they can never make you otherwise than unhappy."

"I know you are right, Charley, you generally are, and I have given up the notion. But I must go abroad, and by hook or by crook, I will, some day. I never look out at that great sheet of water, yonder, without wondering about the unknown lands beyond it; every geography book is a temptation, and my home isn't like yours, Bob. Sam Lennett and I quarrel every day, and I always get snubbed on his account, and he always gets thought of and cared for; and I?

Mr. Lennett never speaks to me—he isn't my father, you know—he wants me out of the way; I only stand in Sam's light. And, of course, mother takes my part, and she gets herself into trouble; and then father stays away from home, or comes in of an evening in a passion, and so all are made unhappy."

"It is hard to bear, Bob, I am sure. I do feel for you, old chap, and only wish your lot was different. Your home was different once—you had a good father then, and you have a good mother still. For his sake and for hers try and bear all that is hard, and depend upon it things will come straight and happy some day. If Aunt Esther were here she would say, you have a Father who is ever good."

"Oh, Charley; you don't know how often I have tried to realise that, but somehow if I have a good thought one day I have a dozen bad ones the next, and I always feel further and further away from all that is good when I most want to feel that I can trust Him. But hark! there's the old church clock striking three, we must go back. It is high time you tried to get a doze before starting, and I shall be gaping all day to-morrow, or rather all day to-day."

"Bob, do you recollect our talking about vows on the Examination day?" said Charles, as they neared the Dell Farm. "Don't let us make them in words, but let us try together from this time to make resolutions. Let our resolutions be that we will always try to help one another, never have any secrets from one another—never disgrace the friendship of one another—and try to secure a happy future in this world and the next. Shall we?"

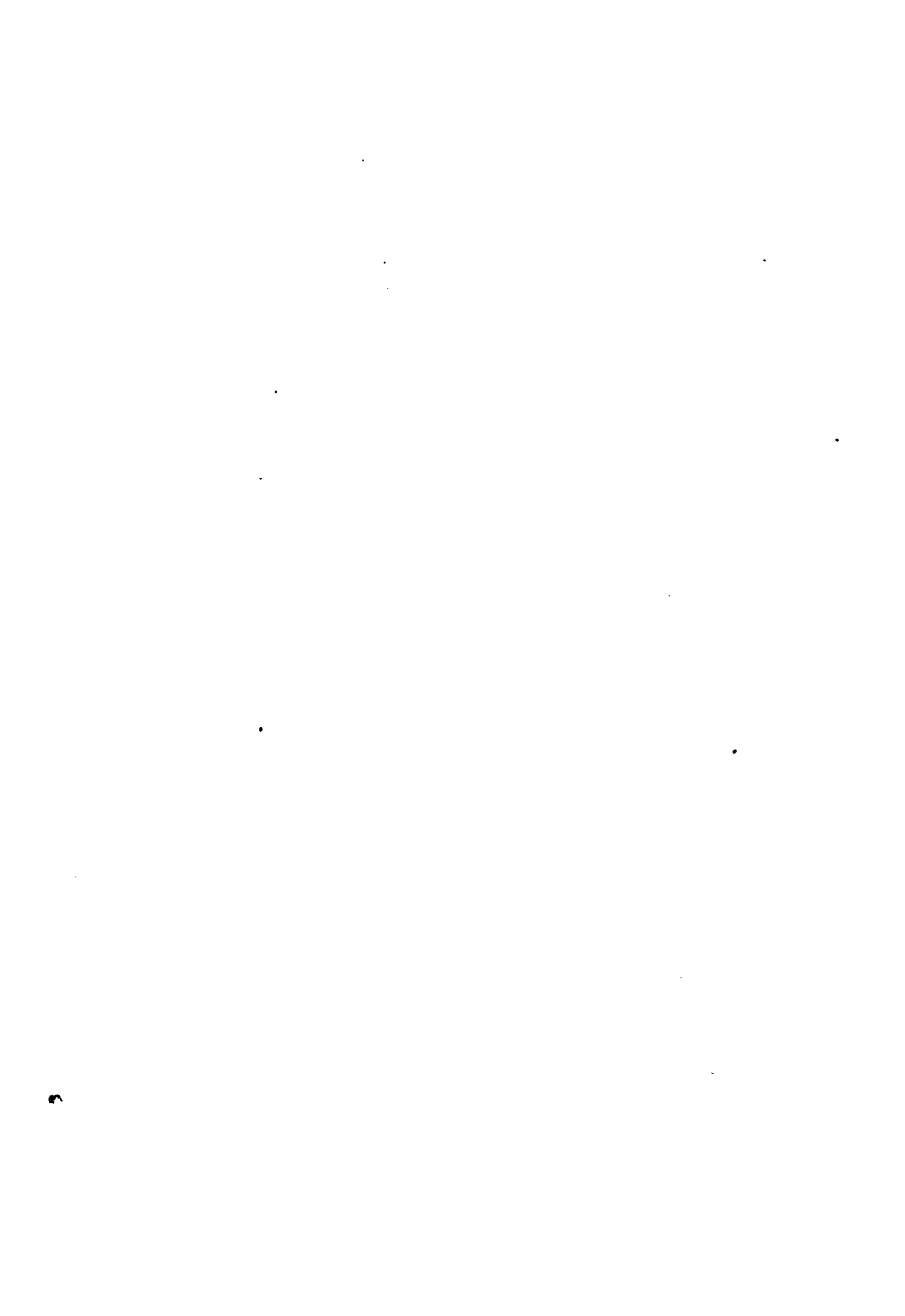
"Yes, we will—I shan't forget to-night—I shall never forget you. God bless you, Charley; and a safe, happy voyage to you."

Charles wrung his friend's hand and tried to say farewell, but the words would not come; a ball seemed to stick in his throat. The bright moonlight as it streamed down upon the two friends showed the glistening tears in their eyes. And so they parted. Would they ever meet again?

There is, perhaps, nothing more beautiful in life than firm, hearty youthful friendship—the knitting together of heart and heart, when thoughts, purposes, and plans are one, when there is nothing to check intercourse, and nothing to cloud love. That was the sort of friendship which existed between Charles

Harvey and Robert Amesbury—and that friendship was the great prevailing influence of their lives. How often it happens thus, and how solemn and weighty a matter it is that in our choice of friends we should have those who will exercise over us a good and useful influence.





Chapter IV.



" O Life ! without thy chequered scene
Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
Success and failure, could a ground
For magnanimity be found ;
For faith 'mid ruined hopes serene ?
Or whence could virtue flow ?
Pain entered through a ghastly breach—
Nor while sin lasts must efforts cease ;
Heaven upon earth's an empty boast ;
But for the bowers of Eden lost,
Mercy has placed within our reach
A portion of God's peace."

WORDSWORTH.

Making New Friends.

OF all confusing scenes in the world an emigrant ship leaving port, is, perhaps, the most confusing. Sailors rushing to and fro overhauling everybody and everything; passengers running about vainly striving to get to their cabins to stow away luggage; porters with bales of goods which are just big enough to block up the gangways; crowds of visitors, all anxious to be near their friends to the last, and perpetually intercepted by others getting in their way. And noise!—there are sailors hauling up ropes and singing the loud chorus of “O-o-h, switch’em up, merrily,” each line ending with a grunt which seems to come from the depths of the stomach; mates bawling out orders at the top of their voices; porters calling “By your leave!” as they push the passengers on one side; or “Below

there!" as they drop parcels on their heads. Then there is a loud hum of other voices, friends parting with friends, and laughing as heartily as they can force out their laughs, to prevent tears which are trying to force themselves out; nervous passengers, who are afraid their luggage will get deposited at the bottom of the hold never to be seen again, and who will take upon themselves to interfere with the orders of the mates; angry passengers, who will not be pooh! poohed! when they find their best boxes stowed away among the coals; passionate passengers, who persist in making room for their visitors come what may, and who seem to think they have chartered the ship instead of one cabin in it.

Such were the scenes going forward when Mr. Harvey and Charles went on board the *Montague*. They had parted with all their friends, and were strangers among strangers. They very wisely thought it better not to prolong partings, and had said good-bye, and refused all the kind offers of friends to accompany them to the ship. They soon found their cabin, which was a comfortable one below deck, and with less difficulty than many around them they deposited their luggage, and then went on deck

to witness the scenes going forward there as the ship went out of dock.

It was all novelty to Charles. There were a thousand things to see and hear; he seemed suddenly to have jumped into a new world. Now there was a laugh at that poor old gentleman with the grey beard who was running about almost frantic, and imploringly asking "Dear mate, have you seen my spotted box?" Then attention was directed to a group who were singing "Auld lang syne," and performing a very significant action to the words "We'll take a cup and drink it up, for the sake of auld lang syne." Along the wharf there were people running to and fro with parcels—little articles of furniture, and suchlike—which they had forgotten up to the last moment, and who were frightened out of their wits that the vessel would move off before they could get on to it.

But amusing as it is to see the confusion and mishaps on a vessel leaving port, there are sad, terribly sad, sights to be witnessed. It is heart-breaking to see the pale faces and red eyes, and to read in those sorrowful countenances long histories of grief; to see parents parting with their children, and

brothers from brothers ; to see the stalwart frames of men trembling with emotion while the tears run down their manly features—to catch the short husky sentences so touchingly full of love—to see the ingenuity of love in performing little acts of kindness which speak when words fail. If there is a living creature with a human heart, young or old, who has never sympathised with the sorrows of others, never been touched by the sight of grief, never felt a throb of emotion, let him go to the docks and see an emigrant vessel start on its voyage, and if he witnesses it with a dry eye, or an unmoved heart, that eye is blind, and that heart is cold stone.

“Father,” said Charles, as slowly the vessel was moving, “do look at that group on the wharf, there, close by that stack of bales. Do you see?”

Yes, Mr. Harvey did see, but not for long. It was a touching sight, and he was a warm-hearted, generous, loving man, who did not live selfishly in his own joys and sorrows, and soon his eyes grew dim and the figures seemed in a mist.

Beside the stack of bales on the wharf, there stood a group of five persons, all dressed in deep mourning.

The strong family likeness told that they were brothers and sisters, and it was not difficult to trace the relationship of the elderly lady. She was evidently the mother. Her eyes were very red, and she held a handkerchief to them every now and then, although with painful efforts she was trying to suppress her tears. Beside her stood a beautiful girl, about sixteen years of age; her pale anxious face told a sad tale, and her attempts at cheerfulness only showed more vividly the depths of her sorrow. As the vessel began to move, amid the cheering of the crowd, the mother and daughter clasped each other in a long tender embrace. A young man—almost a boy—was at the same moment saying the last words of farewell to apparently an elder sister, while a little sylph-like figure was hanging on to his arm, as if determined not to let him go. At last the struggle was over; the young man and his sister mounted the gangway slope, which was just about to be withdrawn; the crowd cheered, hats and handkerchiefs were waved, and slowly the vessel moved away from the wharf. There, upon the poop deck, stood the brother and sister, and they waved their wet handkerchiefs, and strained their eyes to gaze upon those whom they

loved so much, until the figures grew indistinct, and at length were hidden from sight.

It was a day or two before the *Montague* got fairly started on her voyage. She was anchored off Gravesend, where many more passengers embarked, and where many visitors, who had remained on board, took their final leave. During this time Mr. Harvey and Charles had remained a good deal in their cabins, out of the noise and bustle, and had not found many friends, or become much acquainted with those who were to be their fellow-passengers. But as soon as the steam-tug took them from Gravesend, and the actual voyage commenced, then at once began the flow of friendly intercourse. Then everybody began to feel an interest in everybody, for they were all sharers in one common home, all were leaving the homes of childhood, and all were feeling the natural sorrow of parting from friends and native land.

It was a beautiful evening, and the decks were all astir. The Captain had said that the passengers would that night have their last glimpse of England, and, though it revived sorrowful feelings, there was hardly one on board who did not stay up late to gaze, for perhaps the last time, on his native land.

Mr. Harvey and Charles leaned over the bulwarks, and talked together of Ryslip, wondering what was going on there, thinking about Aunt Esther, and living in spirit in the old Dell farm. Beside them sat the brother and sister, whose parting they had witnessed on the wharf.

"Now, Edith," said the young man to his sister, "this is the last parting; to-night we say good-bye to our dear old land and all its treasures, and to-morrow we turn our faces bravely and cheerfully towards the land of promise."

"I never thought I loved England so much as I do, Edward. How true it is we only find the real value of things sometimes when parting from them. I wonder if all the people on board feel sorrowful; it does not sound much like it on the fore-castle there, amid those shouts of laughter."

Charles Harvey heard the conversation, and, with the frank, natural ease which was habitual to him, he said—

"You remember those old hackney'd lines—

'Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?'

I think it is impossible not to feel attached to places by association, and there is no association so dear, and therefore so hard to be separated from, as home and native land."

"Poor Byron!" said the young man; "dead as he was to all that was truly good, how keenly even he felt it; how the better part of the man's life speaks out in those splendid verses of his, when

'Fleeting shores receded from his sight,
And to the elements he poured his last good-night."

"Oh, Edward, do repeat those lines," said his sister; "I should so like to hear them now."

"Yes, do; it will be quite a treat," said Charles; and Mr. Harvey added his request.

Willingly the young man yielded. He had a clear musical voice, and spoke with the accent which belongs to those who have mixed in good society. It was not a mere repetition of the verses; he felt them, and gave them utterance with earnestness and passion.

"Thank goodness," said Charles, when he concluded, "there are none of us who can endorse all Byron said, and I doubt very much whether he could himself."

“If he could,” said Edith, “he must have been the most miserable man in the world. It were a thousand times better to have the sorrow of “the little page” or the “staunch yeoman”—whose sorrows, like our own, resulted from parting with loved ones—than Byron’s, who grieved because he had nothing in the world that claimed a tear.”

Conversation once fairly commenced, it lasted for long hours; and before darkness hid the land completely from view, Edward and Edith Marston and Charles Harvey were all sworn friends. Nor must Mr. Harvey be excluded; he had joined with them heartily in the conversation, and was deeply interested in the history of the brother and sister, as, with the candour of youth, they had narrated it during the evening. He felt exceedingly pleased to find on board two who would be such admirable companions for Charles, nor was he too old himself to enter heart and soul into their friendship. The sweet winning smile of Edith, her earnest confiding love in her brother, and his frank, easy manners and shrewd intelligence, quite won Mr. Harvey’s heart, and he looked forward to their companionship through the voyage with real pleasure.

The circumstances which brought Edward and Edith Marston on board the *Montague* are a short and sad history. Their father was dead. He had been a man of delicate, nervous sensibilities, and for two years before his death he had been harassed and perplexed in business. His partners had involved him in difficulties which seemed to reflect dishonour upon his stainless character. He struggled hard against misfortune, worked untiringly to gain back property he had lost, and re-establish the business on as good a footing as it was before. But his health gave way, his energies had been overtaxed, and just as the prospect of brighter days seemed dawning, he was called away "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Upon the settlement of his affairs, it was found that he was even poorer than his family had suspected; so poor, that it became necessary at once to break up the home, and remove to a small, very inexpensive house. And now came the hard struggle to live. Mrs. Marston had not many friends who could assist them, and fewer who would. Those who had the ability patronised them, spoke strongly and harshly of the imprudence of Mr. Marston, and even echoed

the slur which had been cast upon his character. This neither Mrs. Marston nor her children could bear. They were resolved in honest independence to work their way, and rather have the crust procured by labour, than comparative luxury given as charity. So Mary Marston, the eldest daughter, procured a situation as daily governess, and Edward resigned the situation he was in, which—although it would have been useful in after life, if his father's plans could have been carried out, did not then furnish any means for helping in the present support of the family—and obtained a situation where he had a moderate salary. But this was a bare subsistence for them, and Mrs. Marston could not bear to see the talents and opportunities of her children thus employed. She had a brother in Australia, the only real, true friend she had on earth, and to him she wrote for advice. His reply was full of love, and just the letter which a true brother would write. He was not a rich man; he had worked his own way unassisted in the world, and was just making a comfortable home; but he was a thoroughly practical man, and this was his advice—"I cannot help you much, my dear sister, in England, but I can here. I know it will be painful

for the present, but I propose that you should send Edward and Edith out to me. I can procure him a good berth, and give him a start which will put him in a position to help you all. Edith will be one of us, and, if you like, she can be the assistant mother, or governess, to her little cousins. In a year or so, at the latest, you and Mary can join them over here, and then once more you will have a nice happy home together. I enclose a draft which, if you agree with the plan, will pay their passage-money out, and the sooner the parting the sooner the reunion."

It was a painful test; no one knows how painful but those who have had to experience it, but Mrs. Marston saw at once how wise and really beneficial the proposition was, and she resolved, with the unselfish love of a mother, to part with her children, rather than cramp their only prospects in life.

"There never was such a mother," said Edward to Charles one day; "so loving, so devoted. Her life was bound up in us, but she parted with us as she would part with her life for us."

"Only one other such a mother," answered Charles, "and she sleeps in the old churchyard at Ryslip."

Chapter V.



"I love the sailor ; his eventful life,

His generous spirit, his contempt of danger,
His firmness in the gale, the wreck, and strife ;

And though a wild and reckless ocean ranger,
God grant he make that port, when life is o'er,
Where storms are hushed, and billows break no more."

COTTON.

"The sea ! the sea ! the glorious sea,

What has the earth so fair,
Of hill or valley, grove or lea,
Which may with it compare ?
Oh ! I could sit for hours to look
Upon its wide expanse !
And read in its unwritten book
Fresh charms at every glance."

BARTON.

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A Life on the Ocean Wave.

EVERYBODY knows what sea life is, if not from actual experience, from the oft-repeated tales about it. The first week of sea-sickness, the dread of gales, the discomforts of a rolling ship, the little mishaps it occasions, the thousand and one trivial events which go to make up a day, such as sighting land, watching the porpoises as they rise, or the whales as they blow, the flying-fish in the tropics, or the lunar rainbows. Then there is the novelty of a large overgrown family, whose home is the emigrant ship, and the interest attaching to everybody, as the daily histories of lives, which have become part of one's own, are revealed.

Charles Harvey was very soon a favourite on board. The captain of the ship was a good-natured, kind-hearted man, and he had a son in New Zealand, as like Charles, he said, as pea is like pea. And so he

took a fancy to him, and would often spin him a yarn about things in general, and his son in particular, as they strolled up and down the deck. He was very fond of taking Charles to his cabin, and explaining to him the mysteries of logs and logarithms, sextants and chronometers, and Charles took such a deep interest in it all, and was so apt a scholar, that Captain Roe used to say, if he had the choice of a mate out of all England, he'd choose Charles Harvey. Nor was he a favourite of the captain only; there was not a sailor on board who would not have given up his day's allowance of rum, or plug of 'bacca, to have pleased him, and that is a test of affection very trying to a sailor. If Charles wanted to fish, he never had to cast about long for lines, or hooks, or pork to bait them: if he wanted to go aloft and have a turn at reefing, there was not a hand on board who did not feel proud to see his scientific way of handling the ropes and tying the reef-knots. And when Charles went on the fore-castle of an evening, where the sailors were sitting about in groups, he was always as heartily received as if he had been captain. "Come, Master Charles, give us 'The Death of Nelson,' or 'Poor Jack,'" and Charles would sit down on the deck, sailor fashion,

and begin his song. He had a capital ear and a good voice, and he would lighten many a weary hour of those poor hard-worked men; and he felt proud, and justly, too, that he could gain their confidence, and make them spin yarns to him about home and days of boyhood, which a strange—shall I say unholy—feeling, akin to shame, would have prevented them telling to one another. Charles was a thorough boy, and his genial manners made those rough sailor men thorough boys. They would spend hours together over leapfrog, or quoits, or gymnastics, or dancing hornpipes, and in all those long hours there was never a profane oath or blasphemous jest made by those men. How was this? Surely it was an unusual thing. It was unusual, but it need not be so. There is not a more teachable being in the world than a sailor, and there is not a more desirable opportunity for teaching than during the monotony of a long voyage.

Soon after Charles came on board he was shocked and distressed at the fearful oaths which so often grated on his ear. Mr. Harvey frequently said to him: "Charles, I wish you would not go so often on the forecastle among the sailors; it is not the

society for you." And Charles replied, "I want you to let me be there, father, as much as I can; I believe sailors are always considered a much worse class than they really are, and I think I can prove it. I hope I am not vain or boastful, but I know those men like me, and I mean to turn that liking to good account. I will break them of swearing!" It was a bold thing to say, and a noble task for a mere youth to perform, but he performed it. One night when he had a group of twenty men round him he sang them "Man the Life-boat;" and he sang it so well that one sailor with a round oath declared he'd back him against the world. Charles rose from the deck and was walking off. "Don't go, Master Charles. Encore! encore!—one more song!" cried out all the men at once.

"I'll tell you what it is, mates; I've had a sickener to-night. I would rather shut myself up in my cabin for a week than I would hear a horrid oath like that which Beetlebrow used. It is a disgrace to a man and an offence to God to use such an expression."

There was a look of blank astonishment among the men—some whistled, some laughed outright. One man expressed his surprise by an oath. Beetlebrow

turned sharply round upon him. "Now mate, you shut up, lets have no more o' that." "Ha, ha!" laughed the man, "you're a pretty parson! cussing and swearin' one minit, and then preaching to a fellow against it the next." Charles did not want to lose his opportunity; he was determined he would not condemn, and laugh at that which he condemned, and he felt a strong temptation to smile.

"Now mates, I'll tell you what it is," he said, "I've got twenty songs as good as 'Man the Life-boat,' and I'll sing them to you as often as ever you like, or spin you yarns, or dance hornpipes. I like an hour or two of a night up on the forecastle better than anything; but rather than hear you take God's holy name in vain I would never put foot on the forecastle for the rest of the voyage."

"Well, Master Charles," said Beetlebrow, "I blow'd up this bit of a squall and so I'll end it. Take my word for it, I won't use no more curses while you are up here, shiver my timbers if I do! I suppose shiver my timbers isn't cussing?"

"No," said Charles; "you may shiver your timbers as much as you like if you don't go beyond that. Now, mates, Beetlebrow says, 'take my word for

it.' I'd rather take a jolly Jack Tar's word for it than any other man's under the sun, because if he says a thing I know he'll stick to it. Will you give me your word too?"

"Aye, aye, Master," cried several.

"Then here's the encore of 'Man the Life-boat,' " and Charles once more resumed his seat.

Of course there were occasional "slips of the tongue," but with those exceptions the men kept to their word, and broke off their habit at all events while Charles was in their company.

"Well, wonders will never cease!" said Captain Roe to one of the passengers, a clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Wilton. "I could not have believed that a whipper-snapper like that could ever have such an influence over a lot of men."

"Influence is not confined to years," answered Mr. Wilton; "it is as much in the power of a boy as a man. If I had preached to those men for months I might never have produced such a result."

"You know more about these things than I do, being a reverend gentleman," said the Captain; "how do you account for it?"

"Why I believe there are some minds which have

a natural force, and dispositions which qualify them for special works of usefulness. Our young friend has candour, honesty, and purpose, and I admit, a strong will for one so young; he sees a fitting sphere for usefulness, he applies himself to it, and we see the result. I believe there is not a human being on the face of the earth who has not capabilities of usefulness, and can exert as powerful an influence as we have seen in our young friend."

"Well, if that's the case," said Captain Roe, "and every whipper-snapper is to turn a ship's crew into a set of parsons—begging your pardon—I should like to know what the service will be when these grey hairs of mine are white."

"I'm afraid not much different, for the same power of influence has been in the possession of all, and the same opportunities have been common to all, in times past, and yet the service remains much about what it was, I suppose," answered Mr. Wilton.

"Yes, I see how it is; here's the gunpowder, and here's the light, but they must be brought together before they make an explosion. And the man who brings his opportunities and his influence to bear one on the other, is—is in short—young Harvey."

And so the conversation ended, very brief and very unimportant as it seemed ; but it was something new to Captain Roe. He had prided himself upon his mastership of a crew ; he thought his deep voice, ringing along the decks, and his round oaths—which he conceived to be original and emphatic—were irresistible ; his storm of passion, when with flushed face and clenched hands he would stamp on the decks and rave at his men if they were not prompt in their obedience, or right in their execution of his orders, he had always imagined inimitable. But now a boy, a mere lad of seventeen, shows to him that he, a stranger, without authority to command, has a power with those rough men which Captain Roe, with all his experience of ship's crews, never had ; and the Captain as he paces the deck at night, turns over these thoughts in his mind and chews the cud.

The friendship which sprung up between Charles and Edward Marston, on the night the shores of England were seen for the last time, was every day strengthening. They were inseparable ; for hours they would be on the deck over their game of chess ; or take it in turns to read aloud to little groups of passengers as they sat round with their needlework or

other occupations. Daily they sat together in the cabin writing up their logs, a never-failing source of amusement and pleasant occupation on board ship; and many a long conversation would spring out of the entries which one would read aloud to the other. Nor was Edith excluded; Edward was not selfish; and he would rather sacrifice his own pleasure than debar Edith from enjoyment, and very much of her time was spent with them. The passengers called Edward and Charles "the Siamese," and when Edith was with them they were called The Three Graces. One night, as they were sitting on deck, watching the bright phosphorescent crests of the waves as they sparkled in the moonlight, they fell into chatty conversation; and this is how it began:—

"If I were to write a book," said Edith, "I should call it 'The Voice of the Sea.' You know the quotation—'There are many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification,' and I think the voice of the sea is one of the most significant."

"Will you put my name down for a dozen copies when it comes out," said Edward, laughing.

"And mine," said Charles. "But as there is no

chance of getting the volume in its published form on the voyage, and you have got all the outline prepared, I wish you would tell us 'what the wild waves are saying, sister, the whole day long!'

"I think that's hardly fair," answered Edith; "I am afraid I shall injure the sale of my book. But, seriously, do you not think that the sea is one of the best teachers in Nature?"

"That is begging the question altogether—putting the boot on the wrong leg," said Edward. "It is tantamount to saying, 'I am going to write a book on the Voice of the Sea, and will you be so good as to tell me what the sea says?' No, no, Edith, that's coming the old soldier; let us hear your opinion first, and then we will give ours."

"Well, I should divide my book into two parts; the first part showing the history of the sea, and the second showing the teachings of the sea. And I should begin at the time when darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit brooded over the waters. Then I should picture the first beams of light shining upon its rippling waves. I should picture the Omnipotent One who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, gathering them

into one place. I should picture the first waves dashing against the rocks when the dry land appeared, and try to find out their voice as they united their strength to sweep away the foundations of the everlasting hills which had encroached on their domains."

"Does this sound too much like preaching," asked Edith, pausing to take breath after her long speech, "or do you think my book would be dry?"

"Not at all," answered Edward; "the sea is anything but a dry subject. Go on, please."

"Then I should think of the sea as God's instrument of judgment, and try to picture the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, when the deluge came and swept away the old world; and I should carry on its history till the time when Immanuel rebuked the winds and the waves, and the tempest was followed by a great calm, and then carry the history still forward to the time when there will be 'no more sea.' But I confess I should be in doubt as to the why and wherefore of many of these points; for instance, take the last point, 'there shall be no more sea.' So we had better write the book together, Edward; what should you say about it? Come, don't banter," interrupted Edith, as she saw her

brother was about to remind her again that she was begging the question. "Do tell me, Edward, what you think about it?"

"I never thought much about it, Edy; and your question takes me aback. What do you think, Charles?"

"I have not much defined thought about it, either," answered Charles, "but one reason is, perhaps, that the sea is an emblem of evil, and in the 'new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' such an emblem would not be required, for the 'former things will have passed away.'"

"How do you mean the sea is an emblem of evil?" asked Edward. "I always looked upon it as an emblem of eternity in its boundless extent, and as a type of life in its wondrous changes from calm to tempest, its ebbing and flowing tides."

"No doubt it is," answered Charles; "and it is emblematic of a hundred other things. Mountains and seas seem to be the two mainstays of all illustration, whether for the lofty strains of poetry or the more matter-of-fact teachings of prose, and there is hardly a subject which they will not illustrate. But Edith's book is a religious book, and in the Bible the

sea is an emblem of evil. For instance, Isaiah says—
‘The wicked are as the troubled sea;’ and Jude, in his marvellous little epistle, compares the wicked to ‘raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame;’ and David, in his Psalms, often uses the same figure.”

“Charles, you are as good as a Concordance; I never knew anyone have so many texts at their tongue’s end as you have. But, scriptural or not, I don’t like the idea; look at the sea now, as its gentle waves are glancing in the moonlight; is not that a picture of peace?” asked Edward.

“Yes,” said Edith; “and supposing Charles’ version of the matter to be right, look at ‘the wicked;’ do not their lives seem to say ‘peace, peace?’ But a few hours of stormy wind will lash this sea up into fury, working destruction and death; and so the winds of passion make the wicked like the raging waves of the sea.”

“Well, as Charles says, it illustrates one point as much as another; and it surely illustrates life in relation to eternity. I will give you a quotation from somebody—Moore, I think,” said Edward; and, pointing to a wave—

"See how, beneath the moonbeam's smile,
 You little billow heaves its breast;
And foams and sparkles for a while,
 And, murmuring, then subsides to rest.
Thus man, the sport of bliss and care,
 Rises in time's eventful sea;
And, having swelled a moment there,
 Then melts into eternity."

"But, Edith, you have not given us an outline of the second part of your book. Will you go on, please?"

"Yes, in a minute; but I wish one of you would go and speak to Beetlebrow. He's at the wheel, and can't speak out loud to us, and I am sure he wants to, for he has been making queer signs and faces all the time we've been talking."

Charles and Edward walked up to the wheel. "Well, Beetlebrow," said Charles, "what's up? whales blowing, or has a new island hove in sight?"

"No, Mast'r Charles; but a stiffish breeze has hove in sight. I see it more than half an hour ago."

"Well, that's something new, at any rate; they say travellers see strange sights, but I never saw the wind yet, nor you either, Beetlebrow. It is said that only pigs can see the wind," said Charles, laughing.

"Saving your presence, Mast'r Charles, pig or no

pig, as the case may be, I did see the wind more nor half an hour ago, and you mark my words, afore two hours is over our heads, we shall have it blowin' great guns."

"Beetlebrow, you talk like a prophet. I don't see any wind, and I don't feel any, except this gentle little breeze which is carrying us on so bravely to port."

"Whew!" whistled Beetlebrow; "the skipper's coming. Will you bear off a bit to leeward, Mast'r Charles?"

They went back to Edith to narrate Beetlebrow's prophecy, and in the meantime Captain Roe stood gazing out in the direction which had been indicated by Beetlebrow as the place where the wind was to be seen. Then he held some conversation with the chief mate, who went at once to the forecastle, and seemed to have a deal of business to do all of a sudden. There were a great many passengers on deck, some pacing up and down, some standing on the rattlins watching the waves, some congregated in little groups reciting or singing, and some leaning over the vessel's side enjoying pleasant conversation. It was one of those lovely evenings which are noted at length in

passengers' logs; an evening made for pleasure, and all seemed to have determined to enjoy it to the full.

"Well, Miss Marston," said Captain Roe, as he joined the friends just as they were about to take up the thread of conversation which Beetlebrow's wry faces had broken off, "is not this a beautiful evening? But beauty is deceitful, you know," he said, smiling; "and we are going to have what sailors call a dirty night."

"Do tell me how you know, Captain; it is so singular that you can tell so accurately when it is going to be fine or stormy. When we were in the Bay of Biscay, you know, you told exactly when the rough weather would come, although everybody thought we were going to get over that part of the voyage so comfortably."

"And so we did," said the Captain; "it blew a zephyr, certainly, just a cap-ful of wind, but—"

"If that was only a cap-ful, may I never see a storm," said Edith.

"Well, we shall have another cap-ful to-night, and so you had better enjoy your stroll while you can, for you may not get one to-morrow. But, Harvey, where do you suppose the wind is coming from?" said the Captain, turning to Charles.

"I suppose from the west, where the wind is coming from now. Was that brilliant sunset the sign of wind?" he asked.

"No; that was not the sign, and that is not the quarter where we shall get our wind," said the Captain. "Do you see that bank of cloud over yonder?"

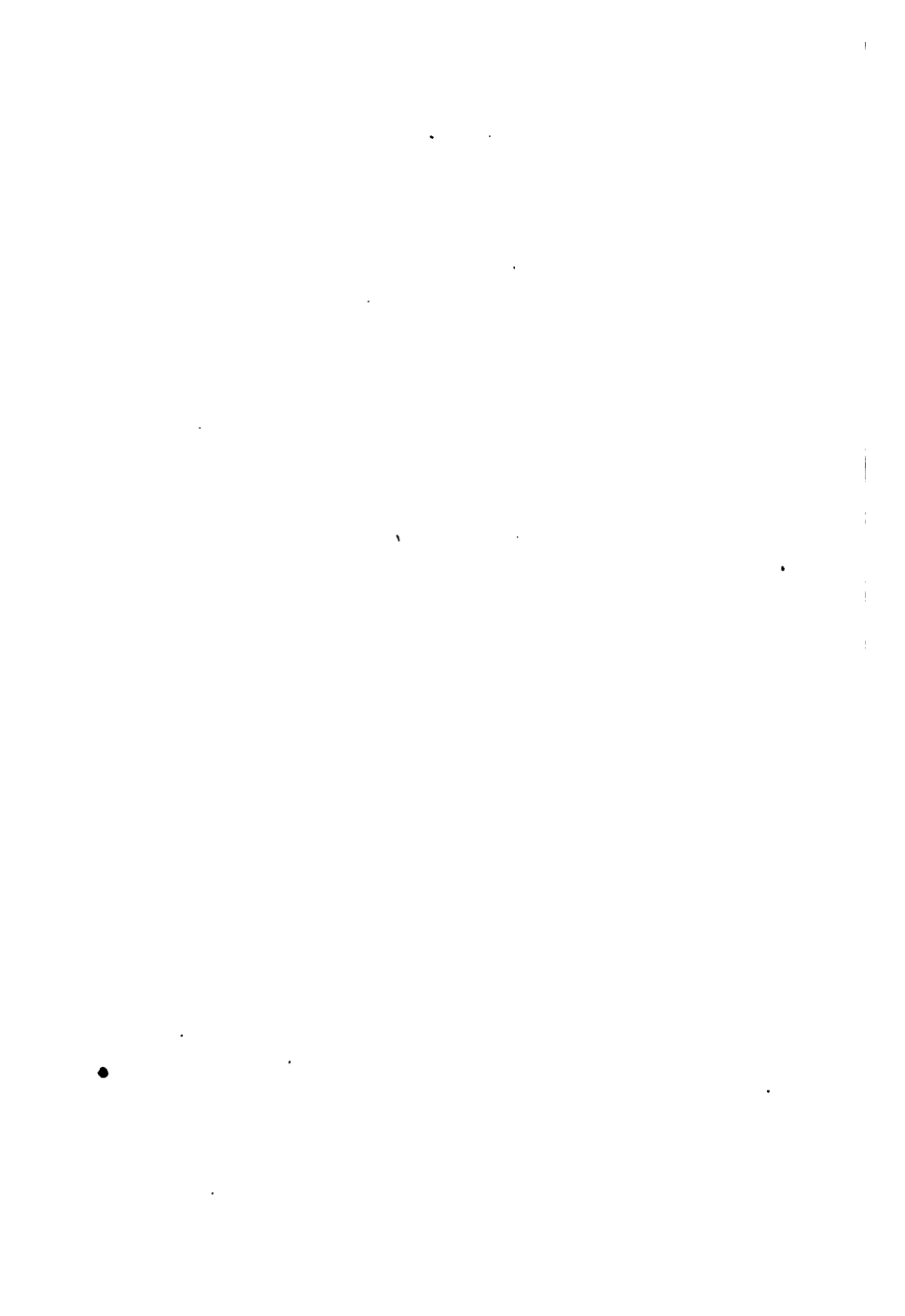
"Yes; but I thought that generally betokened fair weather, Captain."

"Not to-night; if you look well at the cloud-bank, you will see close by the horizon a speck of light. Do you see?"

"Yes," said all at once.

"Well, that's the wind," said the Captain; "that speck will widen, and in an hour or two you will be snug and trim enjoying your quarters below, and we shall be making a night of it up here with blustering Boreas."

Everybody who has been a voyage knows what commotion among passengers the prospect of a rough night makes. Edith's proposed book was forgotten, the conversation was forgotten, and nobody took interest in anything else than watching the widening speck in the cloud-bank.



Chapter VI.



“ To hear
The roaring of the raging elements,
To know all human strength, all human skill
Avail not ; to look around and only see
The mountain wave incumbent with its weight
Of bursting waters o'er the reeling bark,—
This is, indeed, a dread and awful thing,
And he who hath endured the horror once
Of such an hour, doth never hear the storm
Howl round his home but he remembers it,
And thinks upon the suffering mariner.”

SOUTHEY.

“ We sail the sea of life ; a calm one finds,
And one a tempest ; and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.”

WORDSWORTH.

A Passage Overhung with Clouds.

“CLEW up your royals!” rang along the decks, and ere the sound died away the men were running up the rigging, and were soon at their work. Even then to landsmen it would have seemed like labour in vain, for the evening was still tranquil, the sea scarcely ruffled, and the sky clear.

“Clew up the topgallant sails!” and again the men, like monkeys, were climbing up the rope-ladders, and running along the yards. Some of the old hands looked out at the horizon suspiciously, and muttered, “dirty night.”

Charles could not resist the pleasure of giving a hand in the proceedings which were causing such speculations on the part of the passengers, and such interest among all, and when the order, “reef your mainsail” came, he joined the gang, and away

to his work he went with a will. He was followed up the rigging by Edward Marston, and they stood together during the reefing.

"Now, young gentlemen," said a sailor who worked next to them, "you shall see a bit of play to-night on the briny; the 'storm-fiend's on the wing,' as your song says, Master Charles, and if we don't see him or her, (for I suppose storm-fiends are he's as well as she's,) my name isn't Jack Spinks."

"You think we're going to have a good sea at last, then?" said Charles; "that's the very thing I have wanted to see ever since I have been on board—waves mountains high, seas washing over the decks, and all that sort of thing."

"Aye, aye, master, 'all that sort of thing,' but when you've seen it once or twice as I have dozens and dozens of times, maybe you won't think it such a mighty fine thing. But here it comes—this is the key-note, and so you may guess what the tune 'll be."

The key-note was a blast of wind which made the proud *Montague* bow in humility to the water's edge, and tremble from stem to stern.

As soon as the process of reefing was over Charles and Edward returned to the deck, to the great relief

of Mr. Harvey and Edith, who, of course, felt somewhat alarmed for them. As soon as the first gust of wind came a great many of the passengers went below deck, and in half an hour afterwards, as the wind was still freshening and seemed coming on to blow hard, and as all the decks were now in confusion with ropes lying about in all directions, and sailors running here, there, and everywhere, there were very few who cared to watch the preparations further.

If you have never been on a voyage you can hardly understand the sort of confusion which goes on below deck when the weather sets in rough. There are, of course, a great many loose things in the cabins and in the saloon, and everything has to be made fast. Boxes, water-jugs, boots, all commence with the first lunges and rolls of the vessel, to slide backwards and forwards, and these have to be lashed; perhaps in the process of lashing a heavy box the vessel will make a tremendous roll, and then box and passengers will all roll together until they come in unpleasant concussion with something to stop them; if there are shelves in the cabins, and mild smooth weather has tempted the passengers not to be over-careful about finding a place for everything, or rather,

putting everything in its place, and these shelves have become tolerably well filled, the rolling of the ship soon sends them pouring down, and then, once down, they ceaselessly roll until they are caught and put away. These, then, were the occupations which engrossed the attention of our friends as soon as they went below deck; and when their work was completed, and all arrangements were made that they could make for comfortably weathering the storm, they sat down to supper. The meals on a passenger ship are served in *table d'hôte* fashion, according to the class of passengers—the saloon passengers together, the second-class together, and so on. It is no wonder, then, that living together, having everything in common, and sharing as it were one room for long months together, that all get very friendly and familiar, and in fact, become like large family parties. A more than usually large number sat down to supper that night, for a more than usually uncommon event was coming upon them, and there were many who felt nervous and anxious, and were glad to have the society of those who felt like them, as well as the society of those who were more experienced in seafaring life, and who were bolder and more fearless.

When the difficulty of holding plates and glasses, and cutting bread and cheese was over, and the mirth it occasioned was stilled, conversation set in very generally. There were many who had gone through the ceremony of supper without taking supper, and some countenances were a shade paler, and some laughed very loudly, as if they didn't care a bit about storms, and then gave the lie to their laugh as they made anxious inquiries from all who came from the deck how things were going on there.

"Now, Miss Marston," said Mr. Harvey, who sat next to her at the supper-table, "we shall see what sort of a sailor's wife you would make. I have often heard you say you would like to see a storm at sea; do you really think you would?"

"I think so," answered Edith; "there are a good many things attended with danger which are well worth seeing, and worth overcoming natural fear to see. I remember once going to see a wonderful precipice, but the grandeur of it could only be seen by looking down it, and the only place to accomplish that was to stand on a narrow ledge of rock with very little to hold on to. But I went, nevertheless, and though I was very frightened, and my heart beat

louder than I think it ever beat before, still I would not have missed the sight for anything."

"Oh, Edith has got a world of pluck," said Edward across the table to Mr. Harvey, "I could tell you some instances I know of, but as it would make her blush to narrate them here, we must wait for some better opportunity."

"The courage required to see a sight such as Miss Marston has described," said Mr. Wilton, the clergyman, who was sitting beside his wife, a delicate little woman, who held his arm apparently to steady herself against the rolling of the vessel, but really to steady her courage against the emergencies of the night, "is different from the courage to see a sight such as a storm at sea, or an earthquake, or anything where we are not voluntary witnesses. In the one case there is the courage which is the result of health and good spirits, peculiar to some as benevolence or avarice, or any natural quality, good or bad; in the other case there is the stronger and nobler courage which will face danger stoutly, seeing it cannot be avoided, and which brings out all the higher qualities and latent energies of the man or woman."

"But, my dear," said Mrs. Wilton, "you speak as

if courage were natural to all people if the circumstances requiring it cannot be avoided. I think you are wrong; I have known people paralyzed with fear in the same circumstances in which others have shown great courage and presence of mind."

"I think with you, Mrs. Wilton," said Mr. Harvey; "for instance, our friend Miss Marston, supposing we have trying times during this gale, will show more courage than——"

"I," said Mrs. Wilton; and her husband laughed.

"Than some other lady," he continued, "because she has shown that it is natural to her, and as she can show it where there is nothing to be gained but the gratification of—— of woman's curiosity—how much more when there is real necessity?"

"I rather wish," said Edith, laughing, "that I had not said anything about the precipice, I find myself at once a living diagram for lectures on courage, and I begin to think, now I hear that howling wind, I would rather stand on the edge of that precipice than on the deck."

"My idea of courage has been misconstrued, and perhaps for reasons which it is not worth while to in-

investigate, eh! my dear?" said Mr. Wilton, turning to his wife.

"Well, I confess I am not courageous," said Mrs. Wilton, "and so I shall find a great deal of comfort now, as I have always found, in Edith's companionship, and I shall try to imbibe her spirit; and if the worst come to the worst be a Grace Darling, perhaps."

If a fire were to break out in the next street, what would be the subject of conversation in every family circle in the neighbourhood? Fires. Everybody would tell their experiences or the experiences of others, and every fresh story would be more highly seasoned with horrors than the last. If a shock of earthquake is felt, the great subject of conversation is earthquake, and all the horrors of Lisbon are dwelt upon with untiring satisfaction. And so with any event which is uncommon. On board ship a gale is invariably the occasion for narrating all the stories of disastrous shipwrecks and perils at sea, and story after story, each having a fascination which is irresistible, is eagerly heard, until when the time comes for retiring to rest, the same kind of nervous dread which some of us on shore may have felt when discussing

murders and suicides after supper, takes hold of all.

The mere reference to Grace Darling brought up the story of the *Forfarshire*, and that gave rise to no end of other stories. Everybody knew some tale or other to tell, and those who did not put questions which drew out more from those who had an unlimited stock.

It was one o'clock in the morning before any one made a move to retire; all that time the Captain and chief mate had been up on deck, and [from the frequent orders to shorten sail, and the noise and confusion going on there, all felt assured that the ship was now 'nearly under bare poles. The wind had increased to great violence, it was shrieking among the rigging, and howling as it passed away; it had beaten the waves up into anger, and they rose and fell, sporting with the *Montague* as a cat sports with a mouse. Just as the company were rising from the table, and conversation had for the moment ceased, a tremendous sea struck the ship, and the waters fell heavily on to the deck. Every one who had not a firm hold was thrown down, every crevice which could admit water poured forth its stream. Amid

the confusion, a dreadful sound was heard as of some heavy weight falling on the deck and rolling with the ship, accompanied by loud cries from the sailors and the hoarse roar of the Captain. What could it be? surely a mast had gone? had the ship struck? was the *Montague* a wreck? Such were the thoughts if not the words of all, and not until the mate came down and told the distressed company that the heavy sea had loosed one of the water-casks from its lashings, but the cask had been secured before it had time to stave in the bulwarks, did the fear subside. But that was enough to create a general disinclination among the timid ones for sleep, and once more seats were resumed, and doleful tales to while away the hours till daylight.

"Father," said Charles, "let us go up on deck and see the storm. Our sea-legs are good enough for anything, and 'those who go down to the sea in ships ought to see 'the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep,' as David says, and we can't do that in our cabins;" and putting on their waterproofs, Mr. Harvey and Charles mounted the hatchway, and cautiously made their way to the poop deck.

It required all a landsman's skill to walk along the

deck, and only by holding on now to a rope and now to a rail, and watching cautiously the rolling and pitching, could it be done. It was a wild scene. The relieving tackle was at the wheel, to which four hardy seamen were lashed, and all their efforts had to be put forth to make the helm answer to them. The masts were bare—the storm-jib was the only bit of canvas to be seen. The wind blew with tremendous violence, making the tall masts bend and nod at its bidding. Loud and shrill it whistled through the rigging; sometimes the whistle increased to a scream, and it seemed as if human voices were uttering their death-cries. The waves rose up on high, and crested with their white foam they looked like phantom mountains. Heavily rolled the ship, now rising up on a mammoth wave as if it were going to ascend like a balloon, and then plunging down into the deep valley of waters. There as it lay between the waves, with the high banks of water threatening to fall as when Pharoah and his host saw them in the Red Sea passage, it seemed as if the doom of the *Montague* was sealed. But then, as if moved with life, and acting with human energy, she rose from the valley, and once more gained the

summit of a wave, again to plunge into the depths.

There is no sight grander in the universe than a storm at sea. It stirs the heart to its depths, and touches the springs of every noble emotion. A wild excitement of feeling which must vent itself in shouting praise—a solemn earnestness which prompts the desire to fall down and worship—a bold fearlessness and confidence which is more than courage—these are the alternations of feeling which fill the mind, when—

“High on the awful wave we hang,
Suspended by His hand.”

It was some time before Mr. Harvey or Charles exchanged a word. Neither of them had ever beheld the wonders of the Lord so gloriously displayed before, never before had they seen any of His mighty works which filled them with such an overwhelming sense of the glorious majesty of Him—

“At whose command
The furious tempests rise, and at whose bidding
Winds and seas are calm.”

“Is not this a wild, magnificent scene, father?”
cried Charles; for although they stood close together

he had to raise his voice to full pitch to make him hear.

“Is it not an awfully solemn scene?” answered Mr. Harvey. “There is death written in every wave, but ‘He ruleth the raging of the sea.’ Oh, what a poor, puny thing is man, and how mean and insignificant are the works of man when compared with this! I never before felt so completely helpless in His hands; one wave, unrestrained by Him, would be the death-blow to every soul on board.”

“But, Father, we are as safe here as on shore, for ‘Our times are in His hand.’ What a grand idea of God is in those words, ‘He holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand.’ And that same God who moves the world yet tends the little sparrow in its nest, and will not let it fall without His knowledge, will not let one of His children perish unless He sees fit.”

“True, Charles, yet is it not wonderful to think of Him as the tender, loving Father, when we see Him as the awful, majestic Creator—God! And yet such a scene as this gives confidence in Him. Vain is all help of man now—we are perfectly helpless—a few planks only separate us from death; and yet I feel

more perhaps than I ever felt in my life, that I can say with trust and confidence, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my body and spirit.'"

As they were speaking a heavy sea struck the ship, and made her shiver and tremble, as in fear, from stem to stern. A mass of water fell with great violence on the deck, washing away the cow-house and staving in a part of the bulwarks. Captain Roe immediately came on deck, from which he had only retired a few moments, and holding on to the belaying pins, he gave orders through his speaking-trumpet—for the voice unassisted amid that angry roar was utterly futile—for efforts to be made to repair the breach, and for the hatchways to be battened down. It was evident the storm was increasing to its full fury, and such a storm as the hardiest sailors dreaded. Mr. Harvey and Charles were the only passengers on deck, and perceiving that the danger was imminent, they began to think whether it would not be wise to try and make their escape below. But a scene occurred which riveted them to the spot. The foretopmast, which had been swaying with the wind, was carried away, and fell with a crash on the deck. More like weird spirits than men, the

sailors were at work in a moment, obeying the orders of their commander, and cutting away the ropes. It was a strange sight to see those men swinging in the air, clinging to the ropes, and working with an energy which defies description. And faintly amid the confusing roar came the sound of their songs, which they still sung as they pulled at the ropes, now standing and now being hurled down by the tossing waves.

Captain Roe, as he turned his head to give instructions to the men at the wheel, caught the sound of a voice which he felt sure was not from any of the crew. It was Mr. Harvey's voice, which was borne past him, mingling with the wild music of the sea, and the words of his song, sung with the enthusiasm of a new and strange excitement, fell on the Captain's ear, and produced an emotion strange to him as to Charles, who with eyes filled with tears, and hands clenched firmly round the staples of the mizenmast, listened with wrapt attention to Mr. Harvey's song—

“Hide me, oh, my Saviour, hide
Till the storm of life is passed;
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh, receive my soul at last.”

Was it the spray alone which damped the cheek of Captain Roe? Was it the mere natural emotion of excitement which made Charles tremble, and heave a convulsive sigh? Was Mr. Harvey's prayer the mere outpouring of an abundant heart, or did he catch sight of Him "who plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm?"

Recovering himself from his momentary emotion, Captain Roe raised his trumpet to his lips, and shouted, "Harvey! Charles! it is unsafe for passengers to be up here. Wait your opportunity, go below."

"It is safer and wiser we should," said Mr. Harvey to Charles. "Come, my boy, let us wait our opportunity. We cannot both go together, we must each look to ourselves, and I will lead the way."

A few minutes more, and a fearful sea broke over the ship, sweeping away almost everything on the deck. There were cries of agony from dying men heard above the wail of the waters. Spars and portions of masts were flying about, threatening to beat the bulwarks and boats to atoms; and the prisoned waters rushed from side to side with every

roll of the ship, as if escaping in terror. But still the Captain was at his post on the deck, and his manly voice inspired courage in the fainting hearts of his men. Still there were hands ready for work, and working with the energy on which life or death depends.

Charles, who at the moment the sea was shipped had fallen on his hands and knees, clinging to a chain which encircled the mainmast, and then struggling with the waters had crawled to the rigging, now looked out for a moment with straining eyes along the deck. The bright moonbeams came out with full lustre from behind a thick cloud, and shed their pale melancholy light upon the scene. Captain Roe was there, pointing with his trumpet to the only hatchway through which he could get below; the sailors were there; but his father, where was he?

"Father!" he shouted wildly, "Father!" but the winds mocked his cry, and answered with a hoarse, fierce roar.

"Mast'r Charles, come away down," cried a voice. It was Bill Beetlebrow's. "Here, lend me your hand; go below, Mast'r Charles, I'll look after your father, and take care of him."

"But I cannot go till I know that he is safe, Bill. Tell me, have you seen him?"

"Go below, Mast'r Charles, he ain't up on deck. I've seen all round since that blundering sea missed its course, and bust itself over us, and he ain't up here. Perhaps he's below—go and see."

And holding Charles by the arm with a grip which was strong as a vice, he helped him to the hatchway.

"Tell 'em below to take heart, Mast'r Charles; tell Miss Marston the storm has pretty nigh spent itself; there, down you go—good night." And the faithful fellow pressed Charles's hand with a fervent pressure.

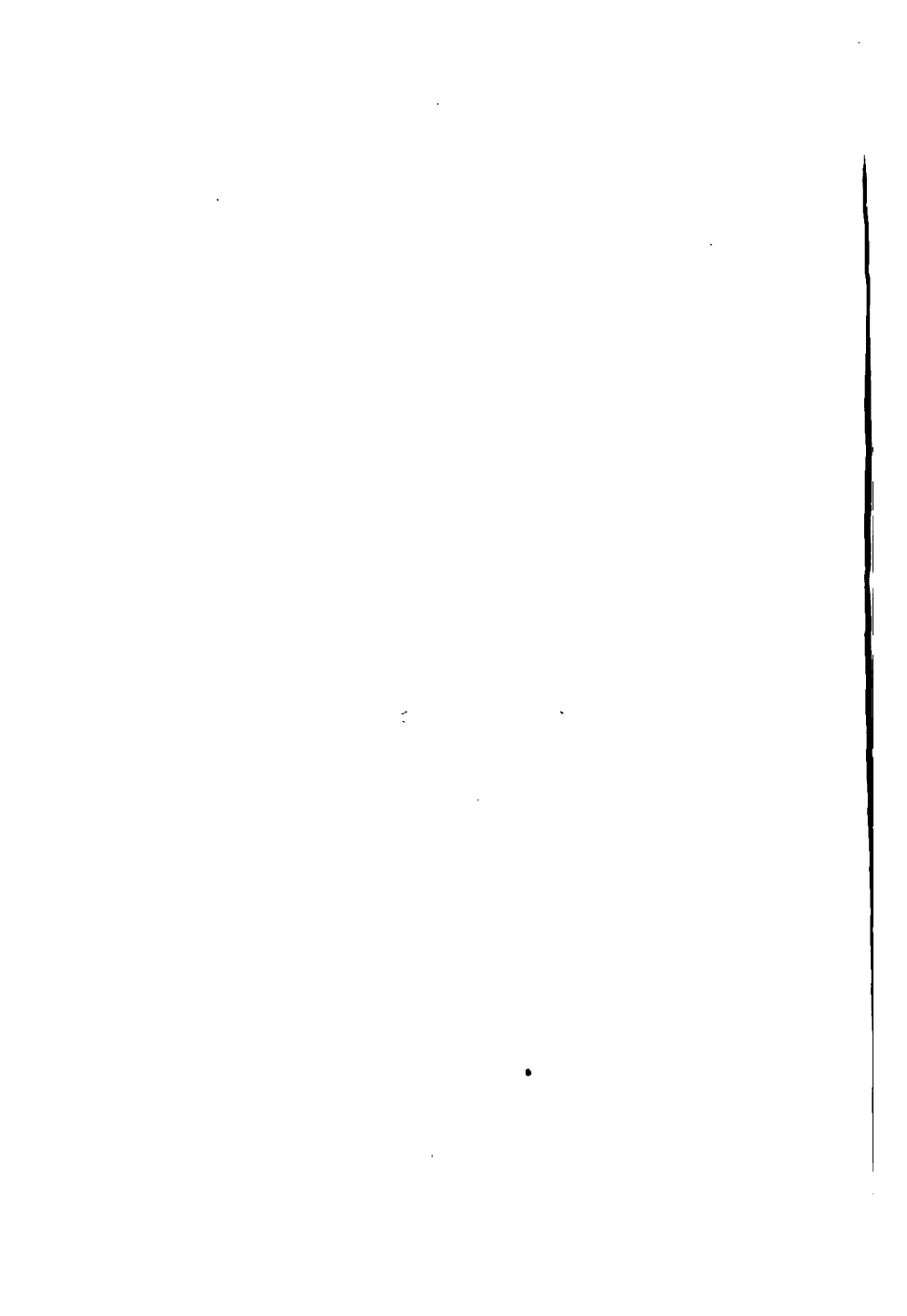
Frantically Charles passed along through the crowds, who, in a panic of fear, were anxiously waiting to hear of the catastrophes which had occurred on deck.

"Has my father come down?" was all he could ask.

It was the only hope—if he had not come down that hatchway, there was no other way by which he could have escaped. A dead silence told him the terrible tale. His father was not there.

Faint, exhausted with the fearful work to preserve his life during the past half-hour—stunned with the dreadful thought that his father had perished—Charles uttered a loud cry, and fell swooning on the deck.





Chapter VII.



" Heart, be still !
In the darkness of thy woe,
Bow thou silently and low ;
Comes to thee whate'er God will—
Be thou still !"

SCHILLER.

" The inward sighs of humble penitence
Rise to the ear of Heaven, where pealed hymns
Are scattered with the sound of common air."

JOANNA BAILLIE.

" There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would upset the brain, or break the heart."

WORDSWORTH.

Not Alone in the World.

THE fury of the storm had spent itself; the hatchways were again thrown open; the tables in the saloon were once more spread, and the passengers assembled to share their meals together. Some ventured to go on deck and see the havoc which had been made there, and those who were able lent a willing hand to help in repairing the damages which had been made. Some took their turns in regular succession at the pumps, for the *Montague* had shipped a great deal of water, and required to have her pumps kept working night and day.

Several days passed before Charles Harvey recovered from the shock which the thrilling scenes on that fatal night had produced. Tossing about in his berth, with the delirium still upon him, he lived over and over again the sad details. As the waves

thundered against the sides of the ship, like cannon against a beleaguered fortress, he still called on that voice which was hushed in death, and dreaded lest that body, which was buried in the waters, should be striking with each wave against the spot where he lay.

Very kind and earnest had been the inquiries of all the passengers as to his health, and there was not a soul on board that did not sympathise tenderly and heartily with him in his sorrow. Kind Mrs. Wilton showed the courage which is native to true womanhood. She braved the rolling of the ship, and the splashing of the waters, which had made their way midships, and tended him with the gentleness and care of a mother, bathing his fevered head, and speaking soothing words to check the wildness of his delirium. Edward Marston was also his faithful attendant from the moment he was carried into his cabin. With a brotherly love he ministered to him, and many a long hour, as he conversed with Mrs. Wilton, and assisted her when a stronger arm than hers was needed, did he watch over his friend.

It was a bright, glorious morning; the wind was gently blowing, sails were set, and the *Montague* was

gaily speeding through the waters. Except for the broken spars, and the patched bulwarks, and the loss of some of the gear on the deck, no one would have thought that that was the same ship which a few days before had been the plaything of the merciless storm. The sea had lowered, so that it was easy to walk the decks, and all the passengers, eager to enjoy the fresh air after their long confinement below, were promenading about, or busily engaged in drying some of their wearing apparel which the sea-water had soaked.

It was on such a morning that Charles broke from the spell of insensibility. Mrs. Wilton, who was regarded as his nurse, advised him to be left quite quietly, to indulge his grief alone. Those were bitter hours, and, as the tears coursed down his cheeks, and the fond recollections of a filial love which was stronger than death, pressed upon him, Charles was aroused from his thoughts by a gentle tap.

"Come in," he said, faintly; for he felt the sight of any face would bring the past more vividly to mind.

"Charles, my son!" said Captain Roe, stepping up to the berth, and grasping his hand. "Thank God you are better, my dear boy; thank God!" but his

voice was husky, and his lips moved with a nervous twitch. His eyes filled with tears, and he bent his head over the berth and wept.

“Oh, Captain,” said Charles, as soon as he could recover himself to speak, “this has been a terrible time. Thank you; from my heart I thank you for this kindness and sympathy. I am not alone in the world while I have such a friend as you.”

“No, Charles; while this heart has a pulsation left in it, you shall not feel yourself alone. Cheer up, my lad! It was a sudden and a terrible death, but, oh, how prepared he was for it! He has reached the haven, Charles; his prayer was soon answered.”

“Yes, Captain; and the spirit of that prayer was the secret of his life. You don’t know what a noble man he was, what a real Christian he was. I don’t know, Captain, whether I am superstitious,” said Charles, rising up in the bed, “but often, as we have walked the deck at night, we have spent hours together in conversation, strange, earnest, serious conversations, which we never had when we were at Ryslip, although he was just as good a man then; and I have often had a sort of presentiment that something was going to happen. One night he said to me, that

if he knew he were to die in a fortnight, he thought he should like to spend that fortnight at sea. He was as brave and fearless a man as ever trod, and these thoughts were not the result of fear, but the sea had such a voice and charm for him, and seemed to soothe and rest him as he gazed upon it, and filled him with such holy thoughts; that was the reason. And when, during that awful storm, he sang that prayer, I felt such a strange fear, that I trembled from head to foot, and felt sure that *the something* I had so often dreaded was about to come. And I think he felt something of the same sort of thing, for he said 'I will lead the way,' and he pressed my hand with a fervent parting grasp. Oh, God!" he added, as he bent his head in prayer, "teach me to follow in the way which he has led! 'Oh, receive my soul at last.'"

"Amen," responded Captain Roe; and then, in a low, solemn voice, he added—" 'Lord, let *me* die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' "

The few silent moments which followed were moments full of life and strength. Ever since the moment when the Captain had been arrested by the

last words of Mr. Harvey, he had been full of anxious, serious, solemn thoughts, such as he had never had before in his life. A new world seemed to have been opened to him; the old thoughts and mental habits of a lifetime seemed to be vanishing away; but, in the excitement of the time, and the demands upon all his strength and energy, he had had little leisure to adjust thoughts, and still less to give them form or expression. Now, as Charles struck the key-note in which those thoughts all harmonized, he indulged in them freely, and in the prayer which he offered, as he responded to the prayer of Charles, he felt that henceforth his lips were unsealed, and the barriers to the secrecies of his heart removed, and that in his young friend he might find one to whom he could tell the mysteries of his soul's life.

When Charles, later in the day, went up on deck, supported by Captain Roe on one side, and Edward Marston on the other, for he was still very weak, he was touched to the heart by seeing the respectful, quiet, unobtrusive sympathy which everyone showed him. Many an eye dimmed with tears; many an earnest "God bless you," accompanied by a friendly pressure of the hand; many a hearty "cheer up,"

greeted him as he walked along to an arm-chair which Mrs. Wilton had had arranged for him on the poop-deck. And then as his more particular friends gathered round him, and strove by every artifice of kindness to rouse him, Charles felt the keen edge of grief removing—he was not alone in the world.

It was close by the mizen-mast where Charles sat, close by the spot where he and his father had stood together just before they were separated. As the night came on, and the passengers retired below, he and the Captain, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, and Edward and Edith Marston, were left alone on the deck. The moon was shining brilliantly; so light was it, that a large-type book might be read distinctly in its beams. The white-crested waves played merrily, and glistened as the spray fell from them like showers of diamonds; the white sails, filled with wind, looked fresh and trim under that glorious light; all was quite still, save only for the voices of the sailors on the fore-castle, who were talking long and earnestly about the storm, and the fate of their three shipmates who had perished in it.

“Mr. Wilton,” said Charles, “will you do me a favour? I know you will not think I am superstitious,

but I should so much like to hear the service read from the Prayer-book—the burial service I mean; and here are our friends with us who would have joined in it very earnestly had my poor father died under other circumstances.”

“My dear Charles, I will readily do what you ask,” said Mr. Wilton, and he soon came up with the book in his hand.

“Captain,” said Charles, “will it be a violation of rule or order, or will it injure your position in any way, to ask the men on the forecandle if they would like to join us? Some of them have lost old friends and companions, and this service is not for the dead, but for the comfort of the living.”

“I will go and give them permission readily,” answered the Captain.

It is a libel on the general character of seamen to say that a religious service is a punishment to them. Compared with the ordinary services on board our men-of-war, and in the merchant service, there are few congregations on shore which will follow a sermon with such marked, earnest attention, and clear understanding of its arguments. Perhaps one reason may be, that the love of social intercourse and change is a

sailor's natural craving; but it is more charitable to suppose that, surrounded by dangers, with long hours for solitary meditations, satiated with the vulgar and licentious conversation and habits to which they are unfortunately too often addicted, that higher and nobler part of the man, implanted as much in the rough, honest breast of a sailor, as in the polished and refined landsman, longs for rest, longs for the enjoyment it might have of higher being, and loves to gaze, even though it be afar off, on the treasures of that inheritance for which every human heart sometimes sighs.

When Captain Roe went on the fore-castle—an unusual thing for him to do—and said shortly, but kindly, “My men, the clergyman is going to read the burial service for the passenger and men who were lost in the gale; would you like to come?” every hat was off in respectful obeisance, and every voice said, “Aye, aye, Sir;” or, “Thank you kindly.”

It was a strange, impressive sight, that service in the moonlight. Reverently they all knelt upon the deck, and then the clear musical voice of Mr. Wilton, tremulous with emotion at first, but growing stronger and fuller as he seemed to catch the inspiration which

moved the writers of those hallowed words—broke the silence by that impressive sentence, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Even those sailors' hard, rough features seemed softened, and, as the service proceeded, many a prisoned sigh burst from their breasts, and tears, which had not known an outlet since the days when they were fondled on their mothers' knees, coursed down their cheeks.

Very beautifully did Mr. Wilton adapt the service to the occasion, and when he came to that part where on shore it is said "We commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and at sea, "We commit his body to the deep to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body when the sea shall give up her dead," unable to confine his living thoughts even to an adaptation of those sublime words, he broke forth into unfettered speech with God, thanking him with adoring gratitude for the lessons of Mr. Harvey's life, and the calm assurance and joyful trust in his death; and, pleading with Him who knows the secret working of every heart, he thanked God if those others who had perished had looked to Him who grants life eternal. Earnestly and passionately he pleaded that the sad

events over which they mourned might be employed in God's own right way to bring out life from death, that not one who then knelt in His presence might live without knowing Him whom to know is life, nor die without "having a sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." And as he concluded, there fell as with one voice, and one prayer, a solemn "Amen."

When the service was concluded a hushed, subdued, holy calm seemed to pervade every heart. Silently the sailors left the deck one by one, and when they retired to their berths, no effort was made to shake it off. That night, as the friends sat together once more round the supper-table, there was freedom of serious speech, and Charles, as he occupied his old place beside the vacant seat where his father had hitherto always been with him, seemed to have become almost reconciled—trustfully, solemnly, reconciled—to the severe providence of his all-wise Father.

During the next few days Charles spent much time alone, and only when the passengers had retired did he walk the deck, for he felt it still painful to meet the eyes of those who knew, and showed, kindly, but still painfully to him, that they knew all his sorrow.

Many a long chat though, he had with the Captain, and every day strengthened the ties of friendship between them. And truly grateful was the society of Edith and Edward. They never rested from plans to divert his thoughts and soothe his sorrows, and every day brought him nearer to them.

It was about a fortnight after the storm that Charles went one evening up on to the forecastle. Never was a prince received by his people with greater pleasure.

"Come, Master Charles," said one, "we must christen the event. I know you ain't much of a dram-drinker, but here's a pannikin, and here's the 'cratur; now let's have a toast all round."

"With all my heart," said Charles; and sitting down, as in former days, with the motley crew around him, he poured out a little of the strong savoury beverage—which, by the way, he very much disliked—and prepared to give his toast. Every man had his pannikin to hand, some with drink-offerings, which were perhaps too large for the occasion, but a little does *not* go a long way with Jack.

"Now, mates," said Charles, "I am not in a very lively humour, I feel I couldn't dance a hornpipe to-

night, or sing 'Red Rover' for a five-pound note, but I hope soon to come up here amongst you again, and go over all the old songs once more, and bring out some new ones too—"

"Hurrah! Long life to you, Master Charles; good again!" and other kindred expressions, acknowledged the promise.

"Now for the toast," continued Charles, lifting up the pannikin, and rising to its delivery: "A prosperous voyage through life, a safe port at last, and a happy meeting with all our mates."

The toast was becomingly received, and its meaning was seen and felt. Many a kind honest wish was expressed for him, although the sentiments were like diamonds set in wood.

"Come, mates," said Charles, after a pause, "let's keep the pot boiling; if I can't entertain you to-night, no reason why you shouldn't entertain yourselves and me too; so fire away."

"Then, my first shot," said Bill Beetlebrow, "I'll spin you a yarn. Its one none of you 'as ever heard before, and one as I don't often come out with; but you see there are times when we seem to be freer at talk than at others, and so, mates, I shall give you a

yarn about myself, and tell you what it was as brought me to sea."

So seating himself on a coil of ropes, and clearing the way for the yarn with a short gulp from the pannikin, while Charles and the men squared their yards to comfortable hearing distance, Bill Beetle-brow began :—

"It's twenty year ago come last Christmas-day, as I was a sitting with my poor old mother in our little bit of a cabin under the cliffs in the old seaport town where I was born. It wasn't much of a Christmas-day we had; mother and me sat down to our bit of beef and puddin' alone, and it seemed a good deal like Sunday, and a duller one than common. But in the evening we went to some neighbours, and they had a fiddle and some company, and we just did enjoy ourselves above a bit. Leastways, I did; but mother sat very dull and quiet like, and I says to her, 'Mother,' says I, 'cheer up, old woman! what's wrong?' 'Ah! Bill,' says she, 'do you hear how it blows? do you hear the breakers on the shore? I can't help thinking of your poor father, Bill.'

"Well, Mast'r Charles, and mates, father had been gone away two years; nobody knew where he had

gone to, nor why he was gone; he never said 'good-bye,' and, of course, it pretty nearly broke poor old mother's heart. Some said 'he had got into trouble, or a scrape of some sort or another, and was obliged to go;' but that I don't know anything this way or that. So I says again, 'Chéer up, mother! and hope for the best; he'll turn up some day, and you will have lots of merry Christmas's and happy New Years.' But she didn't cheer up much, and so, when it was getting late, we made up our minds to go home. But blow! my heart! it just did blow great guns that night: and dead on to the shore! An old salt who lived next to our cabin, walked with us towards home; but all of a sudden he stopped and whistled; then he cries out, 'See! see! a light!'

"There was a light out at sea, sure enough, and we watched it; it was making for the shore. Along the line of cabins the signal ran—the same as in Nelson's song, Mast'r Charles—and every man and woman in the place was there to do their duty. But nothing could be done, 'cept to make a large fire on the beach, and then there was nothing to do but to wait. Nobody spoke; but the women clung to the men, and now and then there was a cry and a groan. On came

the ship, nearer and nearer, till at last it came crash ! dash, upon the shore. Oh, mates, if you had heard that bitter cry it would ha' made your hearts ache for years. I often seem to hear it now as the wind whistles among the rigging, and o' nights when the blustering waves come headlong on to the bows, I seem to hear the very same voices I heard that night.

"It was a woful sight next morn. The sun shone out as bright as if nothing had gone amiss ; but there on the shore lay the dead bodies of the poor drowned creturs who had perished in the wreck. Women-folk have got better hands and better hearts for tending the dead than men have, and so by the break of day they were all at it as hard as they could be. I was moving away a big spar which was on the top of a dead man, and mother come up. 'Oh, Bill, says she, 'this is dolesome work ; move it gently, boy, move it gently ;' and the big tears was in her eyes as she helped me pull away the poor drowned man. All of a sudden she screamed—such a scream !—it seemed as if all the voices we had heard when the ship broke up was put into one, and then she fell right down on the dead man. It was father !

"I hadn't cried, Mast'r Charles, since I was a little

chap so high, but I sat down on the spar and cried fit to break my heart, for there was mother kissing his cold wet forehead, and stroking his hair, and saying, 'you've come home, Jack, dear, once more to the old cabin,' but she didn't smile, and she didn't cry, but her eyes rolled wild like, and her face was as white as a shroud. 'Mother,' says I, 'cheer up, he's gone to the big home up aloft!' But she didn't seem to hear me, but she said, 'Come, Jack dear, let's go home. Bill is watching for us in the cabin; he's grown up so, Jack; come along!' and she took the cold, stiff arm as if to lead him away. Then the truth seemed to come to her like a flash of lightning, and she fell down swooning. She took on all that day, and at night she went to join father in the home aloft.

"All that happened as come last Boxing-day twenty year ago. But it seems as if it was yesterday that I walked up and down the pathway on the cliff keeping watch over them two dead bodies. Mast'r Charles, Sir, you may guess what those days was to me; they seemed like years. Oh, how I wished I had been wrecked too! I cared more for the old folks than I did for all the world beside, and there they lay, side by side in the old cabin, dead and gone!

“It was a New Year’s morning that they was buried, the snow had fallen thick, and the whole village seemed clothed in a shroud. I followed ’em to the churchyard, but I felt like one walking in his sleep; I woke with a start when the earth rolled on their coffin, and somebody says, ‘Dust to dust, ashes to ashes!’ And now I was all alone in the world, and I hadn’t the heart to turn back to the old cabin, so I just turned away my face from it, and I walked on and on over many a weary mile, until when night came on I rested for awhile under a rick. And as I looked up into the clear heavens the polestar looked right down on me, and I couldn’t take my eyes off. It seemed to sparkle like the eye of a mate when he is on good chums with you. So I thought, ‘that is the sailors’ friend, and I’ll be a sailor, like my father afore me.’ So I steered my course towards a large seaport town, and there I found a ship, and launched myself out on my trial trip, and I took to the sea, and the sea took to me, and we shall never be separated no more.

“But, Mast’r Charles, rough and tough as a sailor grows he isn’t all the bad things that is said of him, and there is a soft place in the hard heart, and there as an anchor hold of hope for a safe port after the

long voyage is done. And there is—— Come, Mast'r Charles, cheer up!"—for Charles had buried his head on his hands and was leaning on the windlass—— "Cheer up, Mast'r Charles, your treasures are safe along with Bill Beetlebrow's, up aloft!"

Just as the story concluded an order from the mate to put up fresh sail was heard, and in a moment the men were all on their feet. Charles had only time to squeeze Bill Beetlebrow's hand, and say, "Thank you, Bill, for the story, we must talk about it again;" and the forecastle deck was cleared.



Chapter VIII.



•

“ The clouds—those beauteous robes of heaven
Incessant rolled into romantic shapes,
The dream of waking fancy.”

THOMSON.

“ All round was still and calm ; the noon of night
Was fast approaching : up the clouded sky
The glorious moon pursued her path of light,
And shed her silvery lustre far and nigh.”

BARTON.

“ And on the silence of the scene
Sweet tones from heaven are softly speaking ;
Celestial music breathes between,
The slumbering soul of bliss awaking.”

BOWRING.

Between Earth and Heaven.

TIME wore away, and the topic of conversation on all occasions was the day of arrival in Australia. All hopes were common, all anxieties seemed equalized, friendships had become matured, and the remaining part of the voyage seemed to bid fair to be a time full of pleasure. Charles once more regained his former elasticity of spirits, and although there were times of depression, he sorrowed not as those who have no hope,—the forecastle often rang with applause at his songs, and rattled with the quick steps of his hornpipes. But the greatest pleasure he had was to spend long hours with Captain Roe on the deck, or in the quiet of his cabin, where with one book between them, dear alike to each, they would talk with the freedom and confidence of brothers.

Perhaps not the "greatest pleasure he had," for Edward and Edith Marston must not be forgotten. They were his bosom friends, and being more about his age, it was but natural that they should share very much of his time.

One beautiful evening, when the ship was skimming along under all sail before a fresh steady breeze which kept her running easily at ten knots an hour, and when everybody felt in good spirits, as they knew that the wind was fair, and every knot brought them nearer to their journey's end, Charles was seated beside Edith, watching the glories of the setting sun.

"Now, Edith," said Charles, "you have the keys of the kingdom of Cloudland, and you can always explain that glorious panorama. What is the picture to-night?"

"Clouds have their mysteries, Charles, and perhaps I cannot explain, or, if I could, perhaps the interpretation is for me alone. But it is very strange that in those wonderful coloured clouds there are pictures, which sometimes are so real that even the uninitiated can interpret them. If you had been up in time this morning to have seen the sun rise you would have

had a treat. There was a beautiful white thin cloud rising from the water, and it looked—

‘As though an angel in his upward flight
Had left his mantle floating in mid air.’

But above it was a thick, heavy, leaden cloud, which looked like a funeral pall, and the white cloud was lost in its dark shadows. By-and-by the sun rose from its ocean bed, and the waters glistened with every variety of colour, and the whole sky was filled with the brightness of its glory.”

“And the black cloud?” asked Charles.

“That vanished right away; but the white cloud was still there, only ten thousand times more beautiful than it was before. It looked like a bride dressed in dazzling garments, covered with costly jewels, and it rose higher and higher until it grew a mere speck, and then it seemed to enter through the blue canopy, and was lost to sight.”

“Well, that is a very fine description, Edith, but as I didn’t see it, and you know I am rather obtuse at catching a poetic idea, will you tell me what it meant, or rather what thoughts it suggested to you?”

“No, I certainly shall not, Charles, I have explained it so very clearly,” answered Edith, pretending to be

very much ruffled, "that if you have not soul enough for poetry to put this and that together, and find an interpretation, I am only casting my pearls—— away."

"I should say, then," answered Charles, gravely, "that I really can't make a guess, unless the white cloud represented freedom, and the black cloud the niggers, and——"

"Don't be so absurd, Charles, I don't believe you care one bit about the sky-sceneries after all, and all our long talks have only been nonsense to you, and you have never taken any pleasure in them. No, Sir, *my* interpretation would have had nothing to do with niggers, it was something very serious, and so I shall go over to Mr. Wilton, and tell him, and he will make a note of it, perhaps, for one of his sermons ;" and Edith rose to go.

"Come, sit still, Edith, don't go ; I should really like to have a long chat with you to-night," said Charles, seeing that Edith had really got some serious thoughts, and that she was more inclined at that moment to indulge them than merrier ones. "You must remember I am only your pupil, and have not half the familiarity with nature that you have, but suppose

you describe the scene again, and I will tell you the interpretation thereof?"

Edith very readily resumed her seat, and once more described the sunrise.

"Now I think I can see the picture," said Charles. "That white cloud was an emblem of the soul, fresh, and bright, and pure as it came from the hands of its Creator. Its journey was the first stage of life, and then it met with the dark cloud, which was an emblem of sin and the world. For a time it seemed lost there, but by-and-by the Sun of Righteousness arose, and then the emancipated spirit left the dark black cloud, and, decked in the glorious robe of purity and righteousness, ascended higher and higher, until it passed away into eternity."

"Oh, Charles!" exclaimed Edith, "how wonderful it is that you should have described exactly the very thoughts that I had. But, somehow, it almost always happens that you can."

"I suppose, Edith, it is because our hearts are so united that the thoughts of our hearts must be alike."

For a long while they sat side by side gazing upon the sparkling waters, and watching the ever new and

varied beauties of the setting sun. Were their thoughts united then? and did thought respond to thought? Is there one who has not felt at some time or another that there is truth in clairvoyance, that the emotions or fancies of our own mind are the reflection, if not the identical emotions or fancies passing in the mind of another? As we have felt the angels of the dead hovering around us, speaking through our lips, smiling through our smiles, loving in our love, have we not also felt the spirits of the living?

Be it as it may, Edith's eyes were gazing upon the same scene which riveted the eyes of Charles, and when he turned to her to speak, he saw, and she felt that their thoughts were the same.

"Edith, let me describe now," said Charles, taking her hand, with frank boyishness, while his heart beat with true manliness. "Do you see those two clouds nearing each other, both tinged with the same bright glory, both liberated from that dark solemn mass? See, they are nearing every moment, there is an attraction at work, and it is irresistible. Look, Edith, they are now joined together, and the same stream of light falls upon them. They are lost in each other;

see, they float away together, higher, brighter, nearer to heaven."

There was a pause. Edith did not attempt an interpretation, but her eyes turned from the scene, and she smiled, with a happy, loving, blushing smile, as they met the eyes of Charles.

"Are our thoughts united again, Edith? Yes, I know they are. Those clouds are the emblems of our lives, and our lives have neared together, so near that our thoughts, and hopes, and joys are one; and shall they blend together and never be separated? Shall they, Edith?"

That was a happy evening in Cloudland, and Edith confessed it over and over again as they sat there, still talking with all the ardour of poetry and love, till the shadows of night fell around them.

"Well, I'm sure!" said Edward Marston, coming up the hatchway, "here still! Why I've played four games of chess with Mr. Wilton, posted up my log, set my cabin in order, and had a long chat with the first mate, and that hasn't taken me altogether a minute less than four hours, and here you are, just where I left you! Come, come, this won't do; you're plotting mischief of some sort!"

"We've been for an excursion, Edward," answered Charles; "first we went up in the Chariot of the Sun, and then alighted on the shores of Cloudland; and there we should have remained exploring the beauties of the place, if your abrupt intrusion had not brought us plump down to earth again."

"And, to my thinking, the most sensible and safe place for you to be in. But since you have been so high up, perhaps you have caught some of the angels' melodies, and we are just going to have some music below; so come along, and give us a stave from the spirit world."

* * * * *

As Charles was sitting with Captain Roe one evening in his cabin, conversation settled down into the discussion of future plans. Soon after the death of Mr. Harvey, Charles discovered among his papers a document which he fully expected to find—it was a statement of all the worldly goods and chattels of his father, a brief outline of the plan he had formed for their mutual interest; and in case of accident or death, his wishes were stated as to how Charles should manage in the future. Besides this, there was a Will, in which he left all his property—

no inconsiderable sum—to Charles. The main purport of the statement respecting Charles was, that he should be perfectly free to use his capital in whatever way he thought best, but suggesting that if his desires were to farm, he had better invest the money and take a situation where he could gain the necessary acquaintance with agriculture to enable him at some future time to realize his wish satisfactorily. It concluded by urging Charles to carry out his father's plans in relation to Aunt Esther; and either to send for her from England, if she could see the "guiding finger" pointing her to the antipodes, or if not, to provide for her suitably in England.

"Captain, if all goes well we shall be in Australia in a week from now," said Charles; "and I should like your advice and counsel about my affairs. Although we have deferred talking about the future, I have thought about it a great deal, and so have you. Have you decided what I am to do?"

Charles had begun to look upon Captain Roe almost in the light of a father; and there was such firm confidence in each other that Charles put himself and his affairs quite in his hands, naturally and unreservedly, and the Captain accepted the trust.

“ Well, Charles, I have thought a good deal about it,” said the Captain, “ and I have formed a plan in my own mind which may or may not suit you ; but the choice is of course yours, and I know that whichever way you decide, you will do right.—You know I have an interest in this ship and in the Australian trade. I am weary of this sort of life, and I think after one or two more voyages I shall retire from the sea, and settle on *terra firma*. Then I shall establish a regular business, and start as merchant, still continuing an agency in this line of ships. My son in New Zealand, already connected with the agency, will then be able to conduct a branch for me there, and so I shall be helping him at the same time. And now Charles, for that part of the plan which more immediately concerns you. I gather, from what you have often said, that you do not intend to devote your life to farming, but would prefer some mercantile engagement. Well, as you do not know much about it, suppose you take a situation where you can gain experience ? In the meantime invest your capital, or rather, let me invest it with mine, and then when I start in business, you come into it with me, and we’ll trade under the firm of Roe, Son, & Harvey. What say you ?”

"I say that it is a splendid idea," answered Charles, "and the one of all others that I shall like best in the world. I needn't tell you how I will strive to do my share to reflect credit on the firm. But will there not be considerable difficulty in procuring a berth in Melbourne where I may work up experience?"

"No, I think that can be easily managed with the agents," said the Captain; "and that must be one of our first considerations when we land, so set your mind at rest."

Of course this is but a brief outline of the conversation, and just gives the plan; a wiser or better one under the circumstances could not have been adopted, and Charles felt thankful, deeply thankful, that the dread and mysterious providence which had deprived him of his father was the same kind and tender providence which had raised up for him a friend like unto him.

A crowd of new thoughts rushed upon him with the new plans, and the future seemed like the bright clouds on which he had gazed with Edith, tinged at first with golden hues until they dissolved into a flood of light. As he paced up and down the deck that night, revolving the unborn scenes in his mind, he

was checked in his walk by Beetlebrow, whose watch it was at the wheel.

“Mast’r Charles!”

“Aye, aye, Beetlebrow; I was thinking about the land of promise, and never had the decency to say, ‘Top of the evening to you.’ Well, Bill, what’s fresh?”

“Nothing as I knows on, Mast’r Charles, but the wind, and a thought or two as has got adrift in my mind.”

“Well, the wind’s fair and yards are square, that’s good; so I hope your thoughts are all fair and square too, Bill, eh?”

“Not ’xactly, Sir; I can see the ship’s way clear enough, but that’s more than I can my own. Mast’r Charles, this has been the best voyage I’ve ever had; I’ve left off swearin’; thanks be, I’ve been more of a man and less of a beast, and somehow or another I ain’t altogether what I was!”

“If you’re a better man, Beetlebrow,” answered Charles, with earnestness, “you are a happier man, I’m certain, and surely your way must be clearer than before; but what makes you think you are so different?”

“Well, Mast'r Charles, what's one man's meat is another man's poison, and I think your great loss was my gain. Somehow I never thought about the home up aloft and how to get up there, till your good father went overboard slap into heaven; and when I see how you bore it, and had some talks with you when you come up here, and made the hours spin away at the wheel afore I half knew my watch was over; and when I see how the Skipper wasn't ashamed to be a different man, and how he was just as good a seaman,—cool as a cucumber and steady as a lighthouse in stiff times,—it set me a-thinking, and thinks I, ‘Bill, you ain't the man you ought to be;’ and I ain't yet, Mast'r Charles, but still I don't think I'm altogether what I was.”

“Thank God for that, Beetlebrow; I'm not much of a parson, and so I won't attempt to preach to you, but I do urge you, Bill, to stick hard and fast to your new thoughts; be true and faithful to the One Captain who alone can guide you over the great sea of life, and you will find the chart and compass He has given never go wrong. But I suppose you find it hard work to be true to yourself and to Him, in the forecastle, Bill, don't you?”

“ Aye, that’s the rub, Mast’r Charles. It is hard; you see seamen only expect seamen to be seamen, and have seamen’s ways, and talks, and habits; and the Bible ain’t the book for the forecastle, leastways, it ain’t the book as takes there, and when a man has to fight single-handed agin a whole possey, and he not very strong neither, nor ’zactly knowing what he’s a-fighting for, nor quite made up his mind like, whether, being a sailor, it ain’t better to be a sailor and give up new-fangled notions; it does go hard.”

“ But you are not the man, Bill, to give in because there’s difficulty in the way. Why, when we started from England for Australia, you didn’t suppose all would go well; you knew there would be foul winds, and storms, and dangers, and when they came you never hesitated what to do; because a wind was foul you wouldn’t have advised giving up the *Montague* to her fate,—no, you would have been the first to tack and manœuvre to make some headway; and when you caught fair winds at last wouldn’t you have been thankful for it, and yet while all went well you’d be at work making what preparations you could in case of storms or foul winds coming again, eh?”

"Yes, that's all true enough," said Beetlebrow.

"Well, if you'd do all that for a voyage of this kind, and for poor wages, and if you'd work hard to please the Skipper, and all that sort of thing, won't you work harder a thousand times in trimming your barque over the ocean of life, so as to get safe into the port of heaven? Won't you work, and bear trials, and dangers, and sneers for the great reward that shall be given to you at last; and more than that, won't you do it for the sake of the Captain? Bill, I know you will!"

"Mast'r Charles," said Bill, after a pause, "wasn't it Moses, or Lazarus, or some of them good Bible folk,—I don't know much about 'em, I'm sorry to say, so as to know 'zactly which was which,—but didn't one on 'em say, 'I can do all things, God helping of me?'" Charles nodded that there was a passage to that effect. "Well then, Sir, I *will* do all things, God helping of me, and I will try to be in my way what the Skipper is in his, and what you are in your'n."

"And the same good Father, Bill, who watches over us and makes our lives so happy, will guide you in your difficulties and help you in your troubles, and

lead you safely through life and through death, and land you on His own shore. But you must pray to Him, Bill; I suppose you do?"

"Well, Mast'r Charles, it ain't much o' praying as I can do. I recollects a bit o' what I used to say when I was a younker and knelt down at my poor old mother's lap, on the sandy floor, in our cabin, as I tell'd you on that night, about 'kingdom come;' but you knows the prayer, Mast'r Charles. And then I say that bit o' prayer your father sung; and then I says a few words o' my own making up. If it ain't asking too much of a favour, Mast'r Charles, I wish you'd be so good as to write me out a few prayers, in a big plain hand, for I can't do much at readin' writin', and then I'll learn 'em, for the prayers as I make up ain't half good to speak to—to Him—and I'd rather pray to Him in the words He has wrote."

"I'll do it to-night, Bill," answered Charles, "but you know God doesn't look so much at the words as at the heart; and He would rather have half a dozen words which you felt you must speak to Him, than a thousand said off as a matter of form. I can't sing you a song up here, Bill, but I'll repeat you

a bit of poetry which I think you'll like." And Charles repeated those glorious lines of Montgomery's—

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed ;
The motion of a hidden fire
Which trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near."

"Is that in the Bible?" asked Beetlebrow, when Charles concluded ; "it sounds very much like one o' them songs as the king wrote (David, I think he was), and you read to us on the forecastle?"

"No, Bill, it isn't in the Bible, but the Bible says exactly the same sort of thing over and over again."

"Lor! Mast'r Charles, you don't say so!" said Beetlebrow, with evident surprise; "then I prays a good deal more nor I thought I did. Why when I'm here for hours together at the wheel, I sometimes thinks what to say, and I 'sighs' when I can't say it, but I know I has heaps o' 'desires,' and I 'trembles' like, when I think o' them, for they don't seem the thing for the likes o' me to have. I'll tell you one thing, Sir, I've been talkin' to Him about a good bit at odd times this last week or so; I've bin

a-thinkin' that I'd better leave the sea, and take to the land again; on shore a man may go where he likes, and do as he likes, and if he's got notions of his own he can have 'em, but aboard ship it's different. And then, Mast'r Charles, I don't think I shall be the same sort o' man when you ain't here, somehow it seems to help me to do the right every time I catches sight of you; and a sailor's life ain't much of a life after all's said and done, more partickerlerly if he ain't heart and soul like his mates. So, Mast'r Charles, please God, I shall give up the sea."

"For some things, Bill, I'm glad to hear it, and for some things I'm sorry. I should still make it a matter of prayer; and depend upon it if you ask God to decide it for you He will. But what will you do on shore, Bill?"

"Well, as for the matter o' that, I could do a power o' things o' one sort or another; I could dig, or do ditching, or buy fish and sell, or turn fisherman, or boatman, or dock-labourer, or anything as didn't want much head-piece; and then, Mast'r Charles, I might see you now and again, maybe, and that 'ud be worth giving up a seafarin' life for."

"Take my word for it, Bill, I won't lose sight of

you if you do stay in Australia, and I shall always feel proud to have you for a friend, and try in my small way to help you when any fresh thoughts get adrift in your mind. And now I shall say good-night, for it's just eight bells, and you will be relieved in a minute. But here's something for you to recollect, Bill, as you may not get a chance to look at the Book to-night.—'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.' "

Is it any wonder that Charles slept soundly, or that his life was the soul of happiness? There is no pleasure under the sun to be compared to that which springs from the answer of a good conscience; from the humble but trustful belief that one's life is useful; from the knowledge that God does not disdain to make even such a feeble instrument as youth the channel of His mercies and His love. Life is no empty dream, but the vast theatre of energy, thought, and service; and happy he who has the proud, noble ambition to work hard and cheerfully to impart joy and peace to those upon whom the cares of life, or its weary heart-breakings, or its soulless pleasures, press heavily. Is there one who thinks that this great mission is beyond his reach? Banish the

thought, friend, struggle against it, throw it from you, tread it under foot. It comes from the Spirit of evil, whose activities for you should teach you a lesson of activity for yourself. Dread the thought of living a useless life, as you do the thought of dying an endless death. And when those quiet voices within whisper to your conscience, as they have done, and still do in spite of your suicidal efforts to stifle them, open your heart to receive their lessons, strive with the dignity of manhood to overcome that which you know is derogatory to your true self; seek to be, what in your best moments you know you long to be,—even though the confession of that longing has never passed your lips and perhaps never been shewn in your life,—and then with that strength which is most willingly imparted when the consciousness of perfect weakness craves for it, go on, forward, upward, fighting your way nobly and bravely in the Battle of Life, and you will have the crown that wreathes the conqueror circling your brow, and you will feel as Charles felt that night, that it a glorious thing to live, and that life is only truly worth living for as it is spent for Him who gave it, and who will require it at last.

Chapter IX.



•
"What should we do but sing His praise
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?"

ANDREW MARVELL.
1650.

"My heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

"But now it has fallen from me,
It is buried in the sea;
And only the sorrow of others
Throws its shadow over me."

LONGFELLOW.

The New World and the Old.

“**L**AND ho!” cried a voice from the maintop, and a loud “Hurrah!” burst from the passengers. But although there is great satisfaction in knowing that land is to be seen, it is far more satisfactory to see it with one’s own eyes, and this was denied the uninitiated landmen for a full two hours after the voice sounded from the maintop.

At last there appeared on the horizon something like a pale streak of cloud. All eyes were riveted upon it, and when the Captain brought up his telescopes the excitement ran very high. “Now, Miss Marston, come and have a peep at your new world,” said Captain Roe. “Here, Charles, my boy, lend your shoulder to steady the glass on.”

And Edith, with one hand on Charles’s shoulder to steady herself, looked through the telescope.

"Do you see the dark-skinned New Hollanders dancing a war-dance on the beach, Edith," asked Charles, "or only the waving palm-trees?"

"Neither, Charles, it only looks like a thick cloud at present," she answered, withdrawing to make room for Mrs. Wilton to have a peep.

"A prophecy, therefore, Edith, that our home will be in Cloud-land."

"I hope not," said Edith, "Cloud-land is very good, but reality is better."

"Hear, hear!" responded Edward Marston, who caught the remark; "yonder is the real, hard-working land of liberty; the racecourse of Wealth and Fame, the theatre of our labours, not our dreams!"

"Noble sentiments!" said Charles. "Thou art a second Daniel, most noble Marston. But without damping your ardour, may not Wealth, Fame, and Liberty be dreams, and Labour the reality? Of course I heartily hope not, but I think it is natural for us, as we look at the future, to see it according to our own particular inclinations; thus our pet object is really in Cloud-land, and my home is as much a Cloud-land picture as your Wealth and Fame."

"But both of them will turn out to be realities," said Edith.

To those who have never been for a long voyage, the excitement which is felt as the vessel nears the shore of the long-desired land, can hardly be understood. It is no unusual thing to see those who have gazed unmoved upon the wild fury of a storm, melt into tears at the sight of the pilot-boat, when it is first discovered a mere speck on the waters, nearing the vessel. The fatal blast which has torn down masts and rigging, and the loud roar of angry waters has often failed to call forth a prayer for help, but the clang of the cable as it runs out the moment the words "Let go your anchor" have passed along the deck, rarely fails to call forth praise.

There were but few words spoken among our friends as they sat together that afternoon watching the land, which every moment grew more distinct and revealed some fresh wonder or beauty. Every heart was full. Captain Roe was thinking of the many times he had come into port safely after untold dangers, and contrasted his feelings in the past with those in the present. He thought of his ingratitude and carelessness, and his Father's love and care, and

he thought of the future, when he should enter the haven to go out no more for ever. Would he bring a company with him into that port as he did now?

Charles went back in thought to the old Dell Farm on the night when Mr. Harvey had first mentioned his plans. Oh, how different the reality to the dream! He contrasted his fresh boyish thoughts then, with his more matured and altered thoughts now; and though he could not but feel sorrow—sorrow that he was deprived of one who was once his world, sorrow that he was leaving his grave, which was ever an admonition and a voice for him, he could feel as he gazed on the green hills and rocky banks, that his Father had done all things well.

Edward and Edith were one in thought, as they were one in heart. They thought of the parting on the wharf; of the mother whose spirit they felt sure was hovering round them, and whose prayers were even then spread before the mercy-seat; of the home which they were to make for themselves and for her; and with buoyant hopes for the future and gratitude for the past they were satisfied.

Such were some of the thoughts, and not one soul

on board but had a history of its own, and reflected, perhaps lightly, perhaps seriously, upon it.

It was evening when the pilot-boat was discovered nearing the ship. All hands were on deck to watch it as it came speeding through the water; and when the pilot, a ruddy, handsome fellow, came over the side of the vessel and stepped on deck, a loud and hearty English "hurrah!" burst from all.

At night,—the last night to be spent together on board,—when the company who had shared so many happy and sorrowful and perilous hours were to sit down to their final meal, it was but natural and proper that some little demonstration should take place, and so Captain Roe gave a feast. All were merry and social, and a pleasanter supper-party, perhaps, was never given on board the *Montague*. A bowl of punch, the Captain's own particular brew, followed, and with it the speeches. Not set, stiff, formal speeches, which make speakers and hearers alike uncomfortable, but the genuine hearty utterances of friendly feeling. Mr. Wilton seemed to forget his professional vocation altogether, and, as Mrs. Wilton quietly whispered to Edith, omitted for the first time within her knowledge to divide what he had

to say into heads. Edward Marston forgot that he was delivering his maiden speech, and, unbiassed by the awkward feeling which this invariably produces, waxed warm and eloquent in his thanks to everybody for everything in making the voyage so happy and comfortable, and vowed eternal friendship and fidelity to all who had been such friends to himself and Edith. Charles out-did himself,—“ Limited monarchy is the pride of an Englishman,” said he, “ but our government in the *Montague* has been absolute monarchy combined with republicanism, and a more desirable form of government could not have existed among us. Our Sea King, whose uncontrolled will is law, has expressed our unanimous wills in his. We have had revived the patriarchal dispensation. Captain, we thank you; I thank you no one knows how much. You have brought us through dangers with safety. We who have been bewailed on shore have not been *be-whaled* at sea. A pleasant *row* has made our long voyage short,”—and continuing with increasing animation until words ceased to become the fitting vehicles for describing what he wished to express, Charles concluded by striding up to the Captain and shaking hands with him earnestly, both hands at once.

When Captain Roe replied to all the compliments, he did so as none but a thorough gentleman could have done,—modestly, kindly, intelligently. “For thirty years,” said he, “I have been on the seas, and nearly all that time in passenger-vessels, but never until this voyage have I experienced so much of the pleasures of home, or relish of society. I owe much to you, for a captain is a great deal what his passengers make him, and you have done everything to contribute to my comfort and inspire me to contribute to yours. I have seen some strange sights, and learnt many strange things in my voyages, but this trip has surpassed them all. My friends, you know how events solemn and sad to all of us, and particularly to one here, have happened, but perhaps some of you do not know the influence those events have had upon me. Humbly and reverently I can affirm that they have been employed in the mysterious power of the Divine One to give me life; and I feel I shall not be doing my duty to Him, or to myself, unless I tell you how deeply grateful I am to Him. Gentlemen,” he continued, turning to the officers of the ship, who were present, “I hope you have not discovered that having the fear and love of God has made me the worse

seaman. I trust I have not shown that my duty to you and to all around me has been incompatible with my duty to Him, but that it is possible to be a Christian and a Sailor. I thank you in the name of all for your exertions during this voyage, and I thank you personally for the consideration you have shown to me, for the respect which you have paid to me as Captain, and for the kind feeling which you have all shown in relation to my different life—my new life; and if I have not fallen in your estimation because, through Divine help I have ceased to be what I once was, I hope and pray that you will listen to the Voice which speaks to you as it has spoken to me, and that you may enjoy the best blessings which He can give.”

It was a strange, some people would have thought a very incongruous, evening party; a rare medley of the serio-comic. But no one felt it to be so. It was *natural*, and when true, loving Christianity is seen divested of its cant and its formalities, and clad in its proper garb, cheerful, social, earnest and real, there is nothing incongruous in the expression of merriment or seriousness, and nothing more truly enjoyable. Even those there who sneered at religion in every

form, and made no profession of it whatever, could not but admire the honesty which characterized those who loved it, and were not ashamed to speak out boldly and heartily what they loved. Nor was there one voice silent when the bell announcing the midnight hour chimed, and the Captain proposed that before separating they should sing together—

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.”

Very early next morning the passengers were on deck, gaily dressed in their shore clothes, and waiting anxiously for boats to row them to the land. The duties of the Captain required his presence on board, and Charles could not restrain his impatience a moment after the first boat came alongside. The boat which took Charles off the *Montague* brought on Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, the relatives of Edward and Edith Marston, and many other people in search of friends. But Charles had no friends in the colony, and so he left the scene of greetings to explore the noble city of Melbourne.

After nearly four months of sea and sky as the sole objects to gaze upon, the sight of familiar scenes is a great luxury. Every church-steeple, every carriage rolling along the streets, has an attraction. Charles

walked along at an excited pace, feasting his eyes on every fresh sight, and journeying for miles without an idea of weariness. At last a large building attracted his attention; the men in uniform standing about, and the notices posted on boards, informed him that it was the General Post Office.

“A lucky thought,” said Charles to himself, “I’ll go and see if there are any letters.”

He was not disappointed. A large packet was handed to him, directed in the familiar handwriting of his old friend Bob Amesbury, and a bundle of newspapers, some from Aunt Esther, some from Bob, and some from Mr. Woodbridge.

Turning away from the Post Office, he enquired the nearest way to any green fields, a country stroll, or botanical gardens, or parks. A few mazy directions about keeping straight on, first to left and third to right, and so on, were but faintly understood, but bearing on in the direction indicated, with the letter and newspapers still unopened in his hand, he at last found himself in a quiet, retired part of the botanical gardens, where, lying on the grass in undisturbed enjoyment, he commenced Bob’s long and interesting yarn.

It contained a chronicle of births, deaths, and marriages; a brief history of all the boys in the school, and a general summary of local news. Then it expressed in the frank, ingenuous way which was so natural to Bob, how dull and lonesome Ryslip seemed now that Charles and his father were away, and how he would like to see them again, and spend snug evenings with them as in days of yore. And the whole concluded with kind wishes for prosperity and health. But there was a postscript almost as long as the letter, and as is usual with postscripts, it contained more important matter than the letter itself, and Charles read and re-read it with evident anxiety. The first paragraph ran as follows:—

“I did not mean to say what I am going to say, but somehow I can’t help it, and I think it best that you should know it. I am very unhappy at home, everything has gone wrong with me for a long time, and I feel I can’t stand it much longer. *My mother’s husband* (for I’d bite my tongue out rather than call him father) hates me, and I hate him and his son too. A little while ago we had company, and I was sent out to attend to the cattle and look over the yard, while Samuel was not allowed to spoil his beautiful

appearance by helping in the work; and at supper-time when I joined the party, Mr. Lennett snubbed me before them all, and told me I did not know my place. I'm sorry to say I got in a great passion; I felt like a devil, and if it hadn't been that mother rushed in between us, and his whelp of a son hung on to me like a bull-dog, I should have strangled him. As it was I did enough mischief for one night. But, Charles, this sort of thing can't last long, for ever since then my life has been miserable. About a week ago your old dog, Rover, went mad, and rushed through the village, and came to our farm and did a good deal of damage among the sheep. Mr. Lennett and Sam and I got down our guns and joined in the chase, and when we got to Dingle wood, I was standing about fifty yards off Mr. Lennett, and the dog passed between us; a dreadful thought came in my head, I raised my gun and aimed it at Mr. Lennett instead of the dog, and in another instant I should have pulled the trigger, but your aunt Esther, who was staying at Mr. Woodbridge's for a day or two, passed along the path, and I saw the dog would have been on her in another minute, so I changed my mind and shot the cur instead. But, Charles, I am

frightened of myself, and I shall cut Ryslip as soon as ever I can. I wonder how it is that some people's lives should be all smooth and happy like yours, and some all the other way like mine? Yesterday was my birthday and I thought a great deal of it. I am only eighteen years old, but I feel forty. Every day seems a year. I did not have one happy thought, and even when I was thinking about our long talks together on our birthdays, and trying to feel as I used to feel then, I did as Job did, I cursed the day I was born. Don't tell all this to your father, or to anybody: you recollect what we said when we parted, that we would have no secrets from one another, this is one reason why I tell you this, so remember it is a secret."

Over and over again Charles read the letter, and he felt very anxious. Could this change have come so suddenly upon Bob? No, he recollected how it had been growing ever since Mrs. Amesbury married Mr. Lennett, and he recalled many instances in which he had seen Bob's unhappiness at home, and had heard of the growing feeling of hatred arising from the continual unpleasantness which he had to endure. Charles would have given

anything to have been able to translate himself suddenly into Ryslip. He felt he had an influence over Bob as strong or perhaps stronger than any one else on earth, and he would have given all he had to have been able to exert it on him, and endeavour to quell the tempest which had been growing until it seemed to have reached its height.

Have we not felt when peculiar circumstances have been happening to those to whom we are particularly attached, and we know them to be on the verge of something terrible, that if we could only get at them, and say if only half a dozen words, we could soothe them or alter their plans. Has not every life an influence over some other life, strong as life itself?

But as Charles realized the painful sense of his inability to do anything of immediate good to his friend, he next thought of some practical means to help him. He soon found his way back to the Post Office, and learning that the mail for England would leave on the morrow, he at once commenced a long letter to Bob, in which he strongly advised him to leave Ryslip, which was now a place of great temptation to him, and try to work his way in the

world independently. He promised to send him a draft by next mail, so that if he determined to leave England, he might have some capital to start with, and added that he might return the money any time within ten years. He wrote very strongly but kindly about the dangerous secret, and urged him by every thing that was honourable and right to gain mastery over himself, and seek strength to do so from the one source of real strength.

It was a great relief to Charles when the letter was posted; so much had it engaged his thoughts that he almost forgot the *Montague* and his promise to return to her as soon as he had taken his exploring stroll.

"Well, Charles," said the Captain, as he went on board, "I began to think you had caught the gold fever and were off to the diggings! Why wherever have you been strolling these twelve hours?"

"Through Ryslip," answered Charles, "talking to an old school chum, and reading the County papers, and writing English letters, and exploring Melbourne. It's a noble city, Captain, I never felt so proud of my country as I did when walking up Bourke street, and Collins street, and saw what Englishmen can do. Why Melbourne beats London hollow! Everything

is magnificent, tasteful, and good. I never saw such beautiful buildings in my life, and they are all built just where they ought to be. Now in London all the finest buildings are smothered and hidden by dirty shops and ugly stacks of brick and mortar, but here everything that is worth seeing, can be seen well."

"I can't go so far as that," said the Captain, "but then I've seen Melbourne before, and have watched its growth for many years, and so it is not such a novelty to me as to you."

"Then the plan of the city," continued Charles, "is so admirable. It lies four-square, all the streets are at right angles, and places are, therefore, so much easier to find than in London. Looking down on the city from the Government buildings, it looks like a vast chess-board, or patch-work counterpane. Melbourne's a glorious place, Captain, and I'm certain I shall like it."

"To-morrow or next day we will take some exploring tours together. By-the-bye, I must tell you of some engagements I have made for you. To-morrow we are to call on the Agents and have luncheon there; in the evening we are invited to Mr. Henderson's, to see the new home of your friends, the

Marstons; and early next week, I have promised to take a drive up the country, and spend the day with Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, and see his new Church. But come along, dinner is waiting, and you are the only passenger to dine with us to-day."

* * * * *



Chapter X.



“True happiness
Consists not in a multitude of friends,
But in their worth and choice.”

BEN JONSON.

“He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
Shows something of that happier life to come:
Who, doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it; and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice.”

COWPER.

Celebrating an Anniversary.

“WE must establish this as a regular custom, Edith,” said Charles, “and always celebrate the anniversary of our landing in the New World. The good old Pilgrim Fathers found it a useful and interesting custom, and I don’t see why it should not be so with us.”

“And I shall claim the right of its celebration in my house,” said Mr. Henderson, before Edith had time to reply, “that is, until you have a house of your own, and then I shall always expect an invitation.”

“You may be sure, Uncle, we should not overlook you, for you and Aunt are our good genii,” said Edith. “It really seems as if we had been in Australia ten years instead of one.”

“A pretty compliment to us,” interrupted Mrs.

Henderson, laughing, "I suppose my dear niece has found the time drag so wearily and heavily—"

"No, Aunt, you know I don't mean that; but we have settled down so, and got so colonized; and it seems as if I had known you all ever since I was a baby; and the place has become so natural, that I can hardly realize it is only a year since we landed."

"I wish we had Captain Roe with us to-night," said Edward, "we only want him to make the party complete. Let's see, he ought to be here in about a fortnight or so, I suppose? I hope the *Montague* is having better times of it now than in her last passage out."

"It will be a thousand pities for him to leave the sea," said Mr. Henderson, "he was born to be a captain. But you don't agree with me I suppose, Charles, eh?"

"Not quite; I agree with you that a finer seaman never trod a deck, and a truer, nobler heart never throbbed in any man; but I think it will be a very good thing, notwithstanding, when he does give up the sea and settle down."

"Your eye is on the main chance, Charley," said Edward, "you wont rest comfortable till you see

the name of the firm in big letters. Don't pretend to look modest about it, I know you think your year's experience has qualified you for any mercantile position."

"Don't you be jealous, Edward, because the 'Co.' is not yet added to the name of Henderson. But, joking apart, I do think the year has been well employed by us, and I say it without any wish to flatter you or myself."

"I only claim to speak for Edward," said Mr. Henderson, "and I do frankly say that I am heartily glad he came out to me, for he is becoming my second right hand. As to the—"

"Now I mean to protest," said Mrs. Henderson interrupting the remark; "I protest against commencing the retrospect of the year at this early hour. When you are in Rome, do as Rome does; and as colonists, we must reserve our cozy chat till we brew a bowl of punch on the Captain's recipe, after supper. By-the-bye, do you know what I have got for your supper?"

"I won't hazard a guess, my dear; perhaps English salmon?" said Mr. Henderson.

"No, Beetlebrow came round this morning with a

basket of some fine fish and lobsters which he had caught, and begged to present them for our anniversary supper. Somebody must have told him about it?"

"Beetlebrow is a shrewd man, and no doubt he guessed we should meet together to-night," said Charles.

As he spoke, a smart rat-tat at the street door occasioned a pause.

"It's Mr. Wilton!" cried Edith starting up, "I'm almost sure it is, he said last Sunday he should come over to town to-day if he could, and drop in for a chat. I say it's Mr. Wilton!"

"A pair of gloves that it is Beetlebrow come to gut the fish," said Edward.

"If you please, Sir, a gentleman wants to see you," said the servant to Charles.

"See me!" answered Charles, "who is it, Emma?"

"I don't know, Sir, he wouldn't give his name, and he's a stranger to me."

"Remember, Charles, to-night is the anniversary," said Edith, "so pack off your friend as quickly as you can. If it is anybody from the warehouse, say you will attend to him in the morning. Recollect, I give you five minutes!"

"I shall be back in three."

It was in the dusk of the evening, and Charles only saw a form standing in the passage, without distinguishing the features. He started as if electrified when the stranger said,

"Charley!"

"Bob Amesbury! my dear old fellow, God bless you! How are you?" and the place shook as they wrung hands.

"Come along, I must take you up-stairs and lionize you at once. I'm delighted to see you, old chap, I knew you'd turn up some day."

"Yes, here I am, alive and well; but Charley, can't we turn in somewhere on the quiet, and have a chat together before you lionize me?"

"By all means, here we are," said Charles, leading the way to the sitting-room. "Now down with that bag;—Emma! tell Mr. Henderson I shall not be up-stairs for half an hour. There," he continued shutting the door, "now we can chat. When did you come?"

"I came into Melbourne this morning, but I have just come from Sydney, where I have been staying for a fortnight, waiting for a boat. There was no

Melbourne vessel leaving when I left London, and so I took the first. But how you've altered, Charles, I declare I should hardly have known you. Why, your whiskers are growing," laughed Bob, "and you've jumped into manhood all at one leap."

"You are altered too, Bob, eighteen months make a change at our time of life. What old-fashioned folk we are, no connexion with the lads of Ryslip! But we can talk about Ryslip by-and-by, and I am burning to know how you came, and why you came. Why, Bob, what makes you look so strange? all well I hope; your mother is well?"

"Yes, quite well when I saw her last," answered Bob, "but what makes you think I look strange? Ah! I know, it's the climate, this dreadfully hot weather upsets me a bit now and again, and I'm not acclimatised yet. Why did I come? Well, Charley, things all went awry with me; I tried for mother's sake to bear as much as I could, but you know I always was rather self-willed; at last the place got too hot for me, and I cut it."

"With free permission, or did you come off by stealth?" asked Charles.

"Mother urged me to come away, she knew I

should never settle down there ; and we both knew that her life would be far more comfortable if I were away. Charley, don't think hard thoughts of me because I have left home ; it was for her sake as much as for my own. I could have borne a good deal more than I did if it had only concerned myself, but to see her slighted and ill used by that—"

"By her husband," suggested Charles."

"Made my blood always on the full boil," he continued, "and I should have made her continually unhappy if I had stayed. So now, here I am, old fellow, and I mean to try and forget all the past, and start life in earnest, and make a fortune."

But though the latter part of this sentence was said briskly and cheerily, Charles thought he could detect an under-current of deep gloom and bitter irony.

"Bob, you are not telling me all, you have some secret in the matter, I am convinced ; what is it?"

"Nothing, Charles. In the compass of a few minutes I cannot give you all the details, but we will talk them over some other time. Now I am ready to join your party and be lionized."

A more cordial reception was never given to any stranger on strange shores. Every one of the

company had heard of Bob over and over again, and seemed to be old friends with him. There was something about him which made him at home wherever he went. His frank, easy manners, and pleasant smile; his handsome, intelligent face, and his light cheerful voice, all assisted to create an impression in his favour. He was tall and well-built, and looked somewhat older than he really was. In conversation, his features were all animation and life, and his laugh was of that joyous, irresistible kind which compelled every one else to laugh too; but when there was a pause, and nothing immediately engaged his attention, there was a sad, anxious expression upon his countenance. Charles watched this narrowly, it was something entirely new. He knew that Bob, as a boy, was studious and reflective, but he had rarely or never known him to be gloomy. However, it might well be that the troubles he had gone through—troubles that were particularly hard for one of Bob's temperament to endure—had left their traces upon him, and he hoped that soon, the bustle and pleasure of colonial life would restore him to his former self.

"I hardly need any introductions," said Bob, after

he had shaken hands all round, "I believe if I had met any of you in the street, I should have recognized you, for Charles is one of the most faithful pen and ink portrait-takers I ever knew."

"So well has he described you," said Edward, "that when we asked the servant to describe the visitor to us, we unanimously declared it could be none other than Bob Amesbury. What sort of a passage did you have?"

That question is one which every colonist can ask another, and there is no more interesting subject than to compare notes about gales and calms, and captains and passengers. It is an untiring source of pleasure, and every newcomer revives old memories which are agreeable, even though some of the stubborn facts connected with them were far from being so.

There could not have been a more opportune event than the arrival of Bob on that particular anniversary day. It was just the one thing wanted to give zest to the occasion; and so free was the conversation, so very hearty and unfettered, that before the evening was over, Edward Marston and Mr. Henderson dropped the "Mr." and called him Bob, and Edith and Mrs. Henderson sometimes addressed him as

Mr. Robert, and occasionally they caught themselves saying Bob, in common with the others.

"I haven't spent such a happy night for years," said Bob to Charles, as they walked together to his apartments. "You have found friends, old fellow, and good ones. Mrs. Henderson is a splendid woman, such a kind loving heart she has, and such easy manners, and her husband is just the man such a woman ought to have."

"I need not ask you how you like the Marstons," Charles remarked, "nobody can help liking them."

"Miss Marston is a gem of human nature, a perfect fairy, the angel of the house. Charles, you sly dog, why did you keep that matter a secret from me?"

"What matter?" he asked, trying vainly to look mystified.

"Miserable puritan! don't put on that demure look, you know as well as I do what I mean. Don't imagine that I am so blind that I couldn't see with half an eye all through the affair. Why if I had only taken notice of one little incident, which occurred five minutes ago, it would have been enough; your pretence about leaving your walking-stick when you

knew she was at the door to let you out. Ah! 'Jew, I have thee on the hip.'"

"Your acute observation leads me to suppose you have studied similar opportunities, Bob, eh?"

"Not I," answered Bob, "I never saw any one in my life I loved half so much as Miss Marston."

"Come, Bob, none of your larks!" laughed Charles, "I can stand a joke as well as most people, but that's rather too strong. Ah, well! Bob, if you can get a loving, devoted sister to cheer your life, and raise you above yourself, and make earth a portal to heaven, and life a ceaseless joy to you, as Edith has to me, you will be a happy fellow."

"I like that word 'sister,'" said Bob, not content to give up a dash more of banter, "and I confess, in your descriptive letters, the word as applied to Miss Marston, seemed all fair and square; but I've read in books, and perhaps have been told by consciousness, though not by experience, that there is a closer tie than sisterhood, and I think I've seen that relationship in existence. Well, old chap, I congratulate you from my heart, and say God bless you both, for I've no doubt in my own mind He created you for one another."

"He never created a purer, holier, more loving being!" responded Charles, passionately. "You do not know what Edith is to me, Bob; I have not a good thought or aspiration but I trace it all to her. But I'm making a fool of myself," he added, checking himself; "the fact is, I've never said a thousandth part so much to any living creature about her as I have to you, and it is a new thing to speak about her: but somehow, Bob, I can't keep anything from you."

"And I hope you never will, for 'We be brethren.' This is your crib, then, is it?" he asked, as Charles stopped at a pretty cottage in Collingwood, "a very snug little box it is too."

"Yes, and this must be *our* future crib."

"Mr. and Mrs. Harvey's, do you mean?"

"No, Bob, ours,—Bachelor Hall."

Charles had a couple of rooms in Laburnam Cottage—a little gem of a sitting-room, with doors leading out to a well-stocked and nicely-kept garden, and a bedroom which commanded a good and interesting view. The compact was soon made, and Mrs. Housem, the landlady, very willingly came to terms for an extra bedroom, the sitting-room to be shared in common. And so the two friends, who through the

years of boyhood, had ever had their lives linked together, were now, in a strange land, and both under strange circumstances, once more united.

Thanks to the exertions of Mr. Henderson and Charles, Bob had not to wait long before he found occupation. A comfortable berth was obtained for him in a shipping-office, where the work allotted to him was very much out of doors, and in every way well adapted to his capabilities. It was a great change from the rustic life and habits of Ryslip, but he applied himself with wonderful energy to his new duties; and, thanks to the tuition of Mr. Strangelore, whose glory was to turn out lads with sufficient polish, as he thought, for any post, from ploughman to prime minister, he had neither the air nor manner of a "Hodge." Soon the anxious and depressed look either wore away, or Charles ceased to observe it; and life ran so smoothly and everything conspired to make it so happy, that bygones became as a tale that is told, and, as is so natural in youth, the memories of the past lingered on the bright and joyous scenes, and forgot the gloom.

The long warm evenings in that beautiful climate were full of enjoyment. Charles, it is hardly

necessary to say, found his chief enjoyment in spending most of his evenings at the Henderson's; and Bob, who respected the motto "do to others as you would that they should do to you," purposely absented himself unless the invitations were pressing, or something out of the ordinary course was going forward; and so a mutual exchange of visits soon became the rule. Edward Marston, who "took" to Bob the moment he saw him, and had found in him a young man after his own heart, spent most of his evenings at Laburnam Cottage, while Charles occupied the "brother's" place in Edith's company.

A never-ending source of pleasure to Edward and Bob was to go down to the hut of Beetlebrow, and have yarns with him. Beetlebrow, as he had prophesied, found that he could turn his hand to "a'most anythink when it come to the push," and no sooner had he got his discharge from the *Montague*, than he set to work in earnest. At first, his endeavours were of a very humble kind; he invested his spare cash in a blue apron, a basket, and a stock of fish sufficient for a day. With this on his head, he went the rounds of the city, calling "Fish, O!" and his first day's labour was a decided success. He cleared off

his stock, and when towards night-time he went back to his lodgings in a very small hut, he felt more like a prince than a costermonger, and for the first time in his life, became a victim to the consuming passion, Ambition. His ambition, however, did not lead him out of that sphere in which, as he reverently said, "it had pleased God to call him." The ultimatum of his desire was, to save up enough money to buy a boat and nets of his own, so that he might catch his fish, and then sell them. In less than a year he was able to accomplish this, and when Edward and Bob went to yarn with him at nights, they generally found him either putting his hut in order—for he now had one of his own—or mending his nets and making preparations for a night's fishing. Their delight was to take occasional turns with him, and as their pleasure and his labour were the same, they became a sort of fishmonger's Company. Bill was naturally a bit of a philosopher. He had a shrewd way of looking at a subject, so as intuitively to get at the rights of it. His new kind of life, and the change in his character, favoured his natural habit of contemplation, and when Bob and Edward were arguing about some knotty points which were ever turning up in their long

conversations, Beetlebrow used to astonish them with his practical and intelligent remarks. One night when they were out in their boat a violent squall came on. Suddenly the wind rose from a gentle breeze to a stiff gale, and almost as suddenly it died away. But during its course a boat not far from the one in which our friends were, was capsized, and the fisherman who was alone in it, was washed away and drowned.

“Another mystery!” said Bob, when the excitement of the squall was over, and they had seen the body of the man picked up by a boat near which it passed, “a soul passed into eternity; without warning, without preparation, and no fault of his own, but a pure, simple accident.”

“Then where is the mystery?” asked Edward.

“In this. Why are all the boats we see around safe? Why are we safe, and the accident only to that one poor fellow? I know it is common to say ‘It was the hand of providence,’ but such an event as that seems to be an unmitigated evil, and Providence cannot work evil.”

“Life is God’s gift, and He has the right to claim back, when and how He likes, the life He gave. Mystery is but another name for God, because His

ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts; and He acts as absolute sovereign, and none may question Him."

"Then Fate is absolute sovereignty. That man was born to be drowned, and since the decree had gone forth, nothing could have altered his course. So our lots in life, I take it, are decreed to be what they shall be, and that they must be; for who can question Him?"

"No, Bob, I don't see that; Providence opens up a path for us in life, and it is then in the province of our independent wills to shape our course. But it is God's peculiar prerogative to give life and to take it."

"Then when a man commits suicide, his will is merged into the Divine will, and he does that which it has been ordained he shall do."

"Asking your pardons, young gen'lemen," said Beetlebrow, "ain't these sort o' subjeks things as we weren't meant to understand.? It strikes me it ain't for the likes of us to say even in our minds, 'What doest thou?' because this is one of them sort of secret things which belongs unto God. I'm no scholar, and you gentlemen are, but I don't think we know much more about it than what the Book says, 'It is *

appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment.”

“Bill, you are right as far as that goes,” answered Bob, “but how unequal the fulfilment of that appointment! One man has warning after warning of his death, and lingers perhaps, on a bed of sickness, and so is prepared for the next stage in the order of events; but this man in a moment is hurried out of the world.”

“Unequal is a hard word, Sir, and p'rhaps we oughtn't to use it when we talk of Him who willeth not that any should perish. But we don't know all the ins and outs o' that man's life; one thing we do know—that he had lots of opportunities to prepare for his end, and if he didn't take 'em he will have to answer for it.”

“If that is the case, it puts an end to fatalism in this instance,” said Edward, turning to Bob; “for death is a universal law, and is certain; the time of its coming is as uncertain as in life in other forms. Some plants only live a day, the oak a thousand years. But Beetlebrow's theology seems a little awry.”

“I don't know anything about theology, but I knows what the Book says,” answered Bill. It tells

us, 'Watch ye, for ye know not at what hour the Son of Man cometh,' and that's a warning to all. Ah! young gen'lemen, if our boat had been upset, and us three had been drowned, not one of us would have said a word about fate, or not having opportunity, nor none o' them 'scuses when we stood afore the Judge. It makes one's heart ache to think of the hundreds of seafarin' men who perish every year; why, a gen'leman at the Sailors' Home said the other night (and he know'd a powerful deal about seamen, and well he might, for he'd been years afore the mast hisself), he says that takin' one with the other like, all round,—what's the word, Mr. Bob?"

"Average."

"Aye, aye,—takin' the average of sailor's life, they only lives twenty-seven years, and the average years on the briny for each man is only twelve years. Lor'! when one comes to think o' that, shouldn't we all turn fishermen, 'fishers of men,' I mean?"

Glad to change the subject, which must always be painful to those who have not that personal interest in it which can respond to so personal a question, Bob asked,—

"Do you still go to the Sailors' Mission place, Bill?"

“Yes, Sir; it ain’t much as I can do to help my shipmates, but I can go reg’larly there; and sometimes when a shipmate sees one o’ their own set going in, he gits up his pluck to go in too. And Mast’r Charles allers goes in the afternoon, and very often brings in some o’ the mates or middies as he makes friends of when they calls at his office; and so he’s a fisher o’ men. O! gen’lemen, Mast’r Charles is a wonder, I never see the likes of him afore:” and once upon the subject of Charles, Beetlebrow always waxed eloquent, and only found difficulty in speaking as he found words inadequate to express what he felt.

The good influence of Beetlebrow was incalculable. Knowing as the two friends did the history of his life; seeing that change which is a continuous miracle; watching him as he hushed the oath which broke from his companions’ lips, or listening as they heard him simply and naturally explaining to those who had ears to hear, some of the great truths which were his meat and his drink; seeing him of an evening sitting in the fading sunlight, by his hut-door, poring over the well-used Book, not ashamed to let his true colours be seen,—all his life was a sermon, and led them, if

not to the place where every human soul *may* be led, at least to know and believe that pure and undefiled religion is not a name but a living reality.



Chapter XI.



" Who swerves from innocence, who makes divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Recovers not his loss, but walks with shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with remorse."

WORDSWORTH.

" Oh ! if in after life we could but gather
The very refuse of our youthful hours !"

C. LLOYD.

" They perished, the blithe days of boyhood perished,
And all the gladness, all the peace I knew :
Now have I but their memory—fondly cherished ;
God ! may I never, never lose that too."

LONGFELLOW.

A Mysterious Secret.

DIVINE secrets exhibit as much kindness as Divine revelations. God only lets us know just as much as will make us happy, gives us to live and rejoice in the present, and draws over the future, in that future which He is planning and devising and ordering for us, a curtain which none may raise. And there is love in this, for who in joy would wish to see before them the dark valleys and heavy clouds through which they will have to pass? The darkness of the future would throw its gloom over the present. Or if the present is dark and sorrowful, and in the distance there is light, and the far-stretching landscape is all peace and tranquillity, how we should chafe at the present burden, craving impatiently, erringly, for the rest that remaineth. Thank God for what we do know, and thank Him too for what we do not know.

Charles counted the months, and the weeks, and the days, as they passed and brought him nearer the goal of his hopes—Captain Roe's settlement in Australia. The second anniversary of their landing had passed, and had been spent by our friends even more happily than the first, although not marked by any extraordinary circumstance. And now a month or two only intervened, before the realisation of Harvey's bright dreams. Bright dreams! and yet beyond there were brighter ones still. But the intervening time was veiled, and well for Charles that it was so.

One morning as he was sitting in the counting-house, busily occupied in preparing for the departure of the English mail, Beetlebrow made his appearance.

"Well, Beetlebrow, no ill wind has blown you here, I hope?" said Charles; "this is out of the common way to receive a call from you in the morning, what's up?"

"A good many things, Mast'r Charles; and if you've got ten minutes to spare, I should like to have a quiet talk with you."

"Bill, I know you wouldn't come at this time of the day, unless it was something important; here,"

pushing open a door, leading into a private room, "we can be alone here; what is it, Bill? something gone wrong, I'm afraid."

"Mast'r Charles, its about Mr. Amesbury I want to speak with you. Something has gone wrong with him. It ain't come on all of a sudden neither; but its been a-coming on slow and sure for many a long day. He's got something on his mind, I'm sure he has; and that's leading him wrong."

"What makes you think this, Bill? has he ever said anything to you?"

"No, Sir, I've sounded him, but I can't fathom what he's got in him. Its about two months ago, I first got any scent about it; although I've noticed for a long time that he's had something amiss. About two months ago, though, he had promised to come out a-fishing along o' me, and I waited for him a goodish bit, but he didn't come, so I went by myself, and as it was a roughish night, I put the boat into a creek to do a bit o' work there, and as I was under the bank, a'most 'longside the road, I heard some people talking, and I thought I made out Mr. Bob's voice."

"Well, what followed, Bill?"

"It was Mr. Bob, Sir, and he'd got with him a

queer-looking sort of a man, for I could see 'em as I stood in the boat, although they didn't see me; and he says to Mr. Bob, says he, 'I must have the rest of the money, and if I don't by —— it shall all come out.' 'You shall have it,' said Mr. Bob, 'but only as I stiperlated; I'll give yer twenty pound now, but you must wait for the rest.' And then they got to words, and Mr. Bob was in a terrible rage, and he didn't seem the same as we know him, Master Charles, and he said things which I didn't think he could say, unless I know, for the Book says it, 'that out of the same mouth proceed blessings and cursings.' Well, Mast'r Charles, it set me a-thinking and a-wondering what could have come over him, for he seemed like one possessed, and I made up my mind to tackle him about it next day."

"And did you?"

"Yes, I says to him, 'Mr. Amesbury, that was a dreadful affair last night, I couldn't have believed you would ha' done so.' 'What affair?' says he. 'Oh,' says I, 'I heard you talk with that man about the money.' Mast'r Charles, if you had seen him you'd never have forgot it; he turned as pale as death, and then the blood rushed into his face and swelled

out his veins, and he seemed as if he was going to fly at me in a passion. But he stopped hi'self, and said, 'Bill, for God's sake don't say a word about what you saw or heard, it would ruin me. That one sin has cursed my life.' I saw he thought I knew more than I did, and so I told him all I had heard. And then, Mast'r Charles, I did all as I could to tell him about Him as can take away all sin, and all curse, for, as I told him, if the root is evil the fruits 'll be evil too; and the sin which he talked about was because his heart wasn't right."

"Bill, why didn't you tell me about this before?"

"Well, Mast'r Charles, I a'most promised him I would never say anything about it, and I thought perhaps I might get more out of him of his own free will to tell me. And I thought if he had done something bad, be it what it might, I couldn't see what good could come of telling about it, it had best be know'd to God and not to man; and so I prayed, and did all I could to help him, as I thought. But late last night, Sir, something fresh happened—Mr. Bob met this man again."

"Last night Bob was at Henderson's with me all the evening, and we walked home together to Labur-

nam Cottage, and we were both in bed by eleven o'clock. Bill, you have been mistaken this time."

"No, Sir, I'm not; do you remember when you met a gentleman, in Bourke Street, and Mr. Bob left you for a minute or so?"

"Yes, he went across the road to get the second edition of the 'Argus.'—But he didn't get it, I think,—I forgot that."

"He went across the road to speak to the same man as he met that night at the creek, and I heard him say, 'I must get it to-night, to-morrow I'll meet you, at twelve o'clock.' I was follerin' up the man, for I'd seen him loitering about, and I passed him just at the moment they spoke, but Mr. Bob, I am sure, didn't see me. And then, I thought to myself, I would call at your house and tell you, but then that 'ud make a suspicion like; and so I watched and waited for Mr. Bob to come out, for he had said 'I must get it to-night,' and I supposed that meant money. About ha' past twelve or one he came out, round the garden way, and I knew he must have got out of his window on to the balcony, and dropped hi'self down. I followed him at a distance, and watched him till he turned into Charles Street, and

then I lost him. But I knew he hadn't time to go far, and must have turned into some house there, and those houses, Sir, more's the shame and pity, are not the places for him to go to. They are a'most all gambling-places."

"And did you see him again, Bill?"

"No, Sir, I waited for a long time and I went into one or two places (and such places, please God, I hope I may never go into again), but I couldn't find him, and I thought I should only do more harm nor good if I did, so, Mast'r Charles, I've come to tell you all about it—you've got a longer head for this sort of thing than I have."

Charles sat for some time in deep thought.

"Beetlebrow, I respect your motives for keeping this matter quiet, but I do wish you had told me of it before. Can you give me any clue to the mystery? Have you any suspicion of what is at the bottom of all this?"

"No Sir, I'm quite in the dark. I don't know anything more nor what I've told, 'cept this—I heard Mr. Bob say to the man, the first time I saw them together, says he ' You cowardly villain, I could do you more injury than you could me, and if you drive

me to it the secret shall be disclosed, and you will be the sufferer.' But what the secret is I haven't a scrap o' notion."

"Nor I. Do you think Marston is connected with it at all, or is he in the confidence of Bob in the matter?"

"I think not, Sir, for I've sounded him, and he says to me one day, of his own will, 'Bob seems to have a touch o' the blues pretty often now, he ain't been crossed in love, Bill, has he?' He said it joking, but it showed as he had noticed some tackle was loose. No, Sir, I'm a-thinking he's got into bad company somehows, and has taken to them places which they may well call 'hells.' If you recollect, Sir, when you and Mr. Marston and him went shares in buying your *Undine* boat, you and Mr. Marston thought a good bit about paying down ten pound each, but Mr. Bob didn't seem to take much thought on't, and came down with his ten pound, and yet he ain't been at work out here so long as you two, and he didn't come out first-class cabin, and he hadn't all the gear with him as gentlefolk carries. I only says this to help you to think what it can all be." And Beetlebrow drew a long face, expressive of mortifica-

tion that he had gone so far as to suggest suspicions.

Charles was perplexed and anxious. He was wholly unable to account for the strange circumstances in which his friend was placed. He remembered that he had noticed in him a recklessness of manner, and an uneasiness which often reminded him of the mirth which hid so much gloominess when he first arrived in the Colony. He did remember that he had noticed Bob to be very flush with money, but he knew too that his salary was good for his position and his habits far from extravagant. He recalled many of the conversations he had had with Bob during the past six months, in which they had debated upon questions involving moral and religious principles, and he had often feared that he traced a change for the worse in his mental habits. He remembered that Bob had formed a great many new acquaintances, and had sometimes gone out with them in the evenings to places he never visited himself, and how he had frequently warned him about the bad influences such society might effect. He felt and knew that he had more influence with Bob than any one else, and he remembered how he had sometimes thought whether

Edward Marston was not gaining the ascendancy, but then Edward was such a noble, good fellow, and so steady in his habits, and was working so ploddingly to complete his design of making a home for his mother and sisters that no injury could possibly result from the closest friendship. But none of these reflections brought Charles nearer to a clue; they only testified that his fears of something being wrong with Bob had not been groundless.

"Beetlebrow, have you any plan—can you advise what should be done?" said Charles, starting up from his reverie.

"No, Mast'r Charles, if I had know'd what to do, I shouldn't ha' mentioned the matter to you but I should ha' done it; for I see from the first it must unsettle you a good deal, and you and Mr. Bob has been such a reg'lar David and Jonathan that I would ha' given my boat and hut and all, rather than this should ha' turned up."

"Beetlebrow, friendship and love is cemented by working for and helping one another, and you have helped me to do this for Bob, so don't upbraid yourself, my good fellow. Leave it to me, Bill, and I'll think over the matter quietly and arrange what is to be done,

and then let you know. Twelve o'clock he promised to meet the man, did he say night or morning?"

"He only said twelve o'clock."

"Then I will be with Bob at twelve o'clock this morning and to-night as well."

Hastily finishing the letters over which he was engaged when Beetlebrow entered, Charles went out a few minutes before twelve to call on Bob. He found him in the office, also busy with letters for the English mail, and beside him a bag of biscuits.

"Pressed for time, Bob?" asked Charles.

"Yes, I've got as much as ever I can do, sticking hard at it, to last me till post-time."

"Then you won't come out to luncheon?"

"No, I can't manage it to-day, but if you haven't got your usual 'pressing engagements' we will have a chop together after the mail closes."

"That's just the ticket, for I'm not going up to Henderson's this evening, and I think you said Edward had an engagement somewhere or another. So we will have our feed, and a stroll, and chess. Are you game?"

"Should like it above everything."

And so saying, he turned again to his writing and

Charles left the office. But he passed over the road to a pastry-cook's, and there waiting, with his eye kept closely on the office, watched to see whether Bob's appointment would hold good. But he waited till long after twelve, and seizing his opportunity to pass the door as some people were entering, he caught sight of him, still at his desk, writing away at the letters. Now affairs might rest till twelve P.M.

The evening engagements were fulfilled, and as they sat over their game of chess, both apparently as merry and light-hearted as ever, no one would have thought that a mystery dark as night hung over one, and a secret, strange and incomprehensible, tantalized the other. And yet, both felt an uneasiness which they strove to hide from one another, although they could not disguise it from themselves, and beneath the apparent merriment of each, they detected an opposite feeling.

"You feel out of your element to-night, Charley;" said Bob, at the conclusion of a game at which he had been conquerer; "your urgent private affairs have addled your head a bit; why I'd guarantee to beat you a hundred games running if you would play as wretchedly as you have played now."

"I'm in very good practice too. Edith and I have got to be great dabsters at it. But somehow I don't feel up to the mark to-night. I've been writing a long letter to-day to good Aunt Esther, and that has brought up so many recollections of the past, that I don't seem to have any faculties for [the present. It does one good to look over the past sometimes."

"There is more to make you love the past than there is for me," said Bob, with a sigh; "I wish my mother was safely at rest where yours is; but there——" interrupting himself—"I have given up talking about my past, the pleasant memories are the school-days and holidays we spent together. There is not much of one's life ever worth wishing to live over again, and yet I should like to exchange even the present for some of those days."

"They were happy days, I often think of them. Bob, we were different fellows in those times, we both saw the world with the same eyes, and were more hearty and open, and perhaps happy than now.

"Rather a startling assertion," he answered, smiling; "do you speak for yourself or for me?"

"For both. Do you know that lately I have thought that though we are nearer in one sense than

we ever were before, yet we seem further off. I have fancied—and I've often wanted to tell you so, but it seemed sentimental and stupid, and so I haven't done it—that you have not been what you once were.”

“No great discovery that,” interrupted Bob; “as Shakspeare says, ‘One man in his time acts many parts.’ You are a better illustration of his text, for you have passed from the school-boy with shining, morning face, &c.; to the lover, sighing like furnace over lines composed in honour of his mistress’s eye-brows. I think that’s the quotation. And I may say of you, without fear of sentimentality, that you are not what you were, for in those days I was your Edith, and you were mine.”

“That is not my meaning, Bob, of course we are changed and shall change, that is an absolute law. But it is not an absolute law that friendship should ever be different; that a pure, holy-friendship contracted in early youth, should of necessity pass into that which is a mere counterfeit.”

“I hope ours has not reached that crisis.”

“No, it has not, and I believe never will; but it is not what it was. It is not even what it was when you landed here. We have checked ourselves in

the midst of thoughts, which were once common ground, and have felt startled to find ourselves treading there. We have lost much of that freedom which we once had, and it seems as if we had secret emotions and trials, and difficulties and prejudices which we bear alone, instead of having all things common as in other days."

"Do you speak for yourself, or for me?" asked Bob again, and his face flushed a little, and he seemed to be bordering upon one of those bursts of passion which Charles had so often seen, and as often reproved and checked.

"Don't get out of sorts, Bob, I will drop the subject. I didn't wish to be disagreeable, but only just to point out what I thought was growing perhaps to a coolness in friendship between us."

"Charley, I'm a great fool to be ruffled. I always was, and I suppose always shall be. But I'd rather lose my right hand, old fellow, than what you hint at should come to pass. It is only your fancy, and I take it as a very high compliment that you should have such fancies. The change you speak of, if there is one at all, is only the change which is natural as our characters develope! I am your senior, and claim

to speak with authority on this point. Change is the natural order of being. But you are changed, Charley," he added, seriously; "more changed than I am; you have seen your way out of life, as life is to me. This may be the secret of the supposed alteration, if it exists beyond the natural order of change. You live in a different sphere of thought and life; you are a Christian, I am not."

"But why not, Bob?"

"Ah! there's the rub. I cannot enter into the secrets of God, or meddle with His decrees. What I am, I am; what I shall be He will make me. I would be as you are, Charles; but my time has not come."

"You have changed, Bob, even in these thoughts; your heart tells you you have. I remember when we both believed that Heaven was open equally to us, and salvation equally free to us, and His love equally strong to us, and the capacity to love in return equally implanted in our hearts. And it is so now, Bob, as surely true as His word is true. That has not changed, but our thoughts of Him have changed."

There was a pause for a minute or two. Bob

broke it by rising from his seat and saying, as he paced the room, "Charley, you never had a disposition like mine to battle with; you never knew the trouble of a miserable self-will; you never had to curb a violent temper. You were not brought up in a home where every day, and every hour of the day fed and fostered all this evil. You have never been thwarted all your life by an inward law, which prevented the good you would do, and enforced the evil you would have avoided. You never felt your life cursed by a load which human aid could never remove, and you never felt, when praying for higher strength, that there was no eye to pity, no arm to save! I did think once that heaven and salvation and love were all equally free; but now I know they are not, is it any wonder there should be a change?"

Charles was paralyzed; he had little dreamed how great were the emotions, how deep the gloom that had lurked in the heart of his friend.

"Oh, Bob! I beseech you, by everything that is holy and sacred, by the recollections of childhood, by the loving heart of God, not to indulge in such thoughts as these! You have had much to bear, I know, but His strength can help you, will help you. His love is over

you, His mercy is free to you. Do not wrap yourself up in this fearful infidelity. Dash down these fetters which imprison you. You can be made free and happy, and you can overcome yourself, through Him who has overcome."

"It may be so," said Bob, mechanically gathering up the chessmen; "the future may show it, the past has not. But come, Charles, let us drop the subject; I have betrayed myself into an expression of feeling, and you must not take advantage of it. We will talk together again about it—not to-night, I am not in the frame for it; like you, I feel out of sorts—and it's getting late, so I will ring for supper: why it's eleven o'clock!"

Is it invariably the case, that when an intimate friend has done what is hard even for an intimate friend to do—spoken personally about religion—that he should feel an awkwardness, a kind of restraint and nervousness, which conversation on any other subject would not produce? Is it invariably the case that if a friend writes to a friend for the same object, the next time he sees the one for whom he has felt and expressed anxiety, he feels a sort of sheepishness, as if his action had been wrong rather than right?"

Strange, that it should be so; that life should engross so much thought, and present such innumerable subjects for interchange of thought, when the destiny of life—its grand final issues, are unspoken topics.

But this was not the only cause which made the evening meal a gloomy and embarrassed one. Each was engrossed with his own thoughts, and when about half-past eleven, they rose from the almost untasted supper, and the friends shook hands as they parted for the night, there was more of reserve and restraint than they had ever felt before.

The household had retired, and they went upstairs quietly together. Their bedrooms were both at the back of the house; Charles's room was immediately over their sitting-room, and Bob's was the other side of the hall which ended in a door-way and portico leading into the garden. Charles went into his room, blew out his candle, and then noiselessly and stealthily crept downstairs. As quietly he undid the fastenings of the folding doors of the sitting-room, which led into the garden, and ensconced himself close beside the folds of the curtains. It now would be impossible for Bob to leave the house unseen, and Charles had re-

solved to follow him. He had not long to wait; in about a quarter of an hour he heard Bob's window open, then there was a rustling among the ivy which over-ran the portico, a jump on to the grass-plot, and Bob passed the window. Charles had taken the precaution as he came downstairs to take from the hall pegs a hat (he usually wore a cap) and a cloak belonging to some of the family, and hastily putting them on, he followed after Bob. It was a dull night, the clouds were thick and heavy, and the few minutes which elapsed between the departure of each, rendered them indistinct one from the other, although Bob had not got more than a start of a hundred yards. He walked rapidly away from the city towards the fields. The clock was striking twelve as Bob crossed a stile, and turned into a narrow pathway beside the river. Charles saw some one standing under a lamp-post in the distance. He doubted not that was the man with whom the appointment was made. The pathway had on one side the river, and on the other a low hedge, which fenced in some fields. Charles halted, fearing he should be seen, then pulling an opening in the hedge, he scrambled through the gap, and bending low, almost on hands and knees, he crept along rapidly,

till only a few yards separated him from Bob. Breathlessly he lay upon the ground, and overheard the strange conversation.

“You are here to time, then, Mr. Amesbury?”

“Yes; when have I not been?”

“I’ve no cause to grumble. Have you got the dibs?”

“I have; count them.”

“Thirty! Is that all I’m to have?”

“Yes, that is all. You shall have the whole next month.”

“Well, the sooner this job’s finished the better for both of us. I’m going to the diggings or else to England next month, and I want all I can get. Let’s see, fifty more completes the job?”

“It does; and then, thank God, this devilry will come to an end!”

“Devilry! you’d have known a precious sight more of devilry if you’d had your due; and you know it.”

“And you? don’t imagine you have the pull on your side:—but I am not here to argue, but to fulfil my contract. Now fulfil yours—give me the receipt.”

"There it is. But, Mr. Amesbury, *I have the pull*, and you know it, too. I know how this thirty pounds came, and I know how the next will come. Ah! you start, do you? I've a stronger pull than you thought for, have I? Luck doesn't always come with every throw of the dice—that is to say, not with some."

A cry, a groan, a stifled sob—no, not one of these, but all blended together—burst from Charles.

"You cowardly, devilish villain! you have cursed my life, will you curse it for ever?"

"Oh dear no! not at all! A bargain's a bargain! There's honour among thieves, you know. I don't want to infringe; but when you ride the high-horse like that I think it is as well just to hint that I know a thing or two more than you give me credit for. But conversation doesn't seem agreeable. Have you anything more to arrange?"

"Nothing."

"Then I shall see you again—say this night month; and, if you wish it, we will never have any more of these meetings. Why we should meet in such a place as this, though, I don't know, it gives a fellow the blues."

"I prefer it. You have pledged yourself never to

recognise me elsewhere. I would remind you that you have once broken that pledge."

"Who's fault was that? Your money was not forthcoming, and you broke your compact. But there, it's no use raking up dirty puddles. Good night."

Bob turned away haughtily, and retraced his steps along the pathway. The stranger took the opposite direction. Charles again crept along under the low hedge.

Reaching the end of the pathway Bob halted, and leaned upon the stile. He took off his cap and passed his fevered hand through his hair, then, throwing himself on the grass, he wept aloud.

It was more than Charles could bear to hear that cry wrung from his friend's heart. He could not restrain the impulse which possessed him—in a moment he was by his side.

"Bob, my dear old chum!" and his voice choked with emotion.

"Oh, Charles! why are you here?" Then starting to his feet, and dashing the tear from his eye, his whole frame quivering with passion—"How dare you pry into my affairs! what devil's plot are you hatching? what right have you to give this gratuitous insult?"

Charles did not attempt to stop the flood of angry invective—he did not hush the bitter words which poured forth with the impetus of passion—quietly he waited until the reaction should take place.

“Perhaps I am to blame, Bob, but I could not rest at ease and see you suffer. Oh! what is all this mystery? What is this terrible secret which is drying up the springs of your life, and making you so miserable? You will not keep it from me, Bob?”

“Charley, I must; don’t ask me, don’t tempt me to tell you. I cannot, dare not, will not. No; I’d rather die, and let the secret rot away! It could do you no good to know it—do you know it?” he asked, and he held the arm of Charles with a convulsive grip.

“No, Bob, I do not; I only know that you have a secret, and that you are in the habit of meeting this man, and I heard your conversation to-night.”

“And what have you learned from that conversation?” demanded Bob, still holding Charles by the arm with such a grasp, that it almost forced from him a cry of pain.

“Nothing more than that you have to pay that man money, and that he has found out how you obtain the money you are paying him.”

"Charles, swear to me that you do not know more."

"There is no need for that—I give you my word, Bob; and if I knew all, surely you would trust me to keep that knowledge secret?"

"Tell me, do you *guess* more? Charles, what do you think I have done to bring myself down to this depth?"

"I cannot guess, I will not trust myself to guess. No, Bob, I declare that I neither know nor guess what is destroying body and soul. But this I do know—that your secret is the cause of your change in heart and thought; it is this sin, whatever it is, that hides God like a thick cloud from you! Bob, if you will not confide in me, oh! go to Him, tell Him all, confess all; it is not too late. He'll forgive, even though your sins are red as crimson."

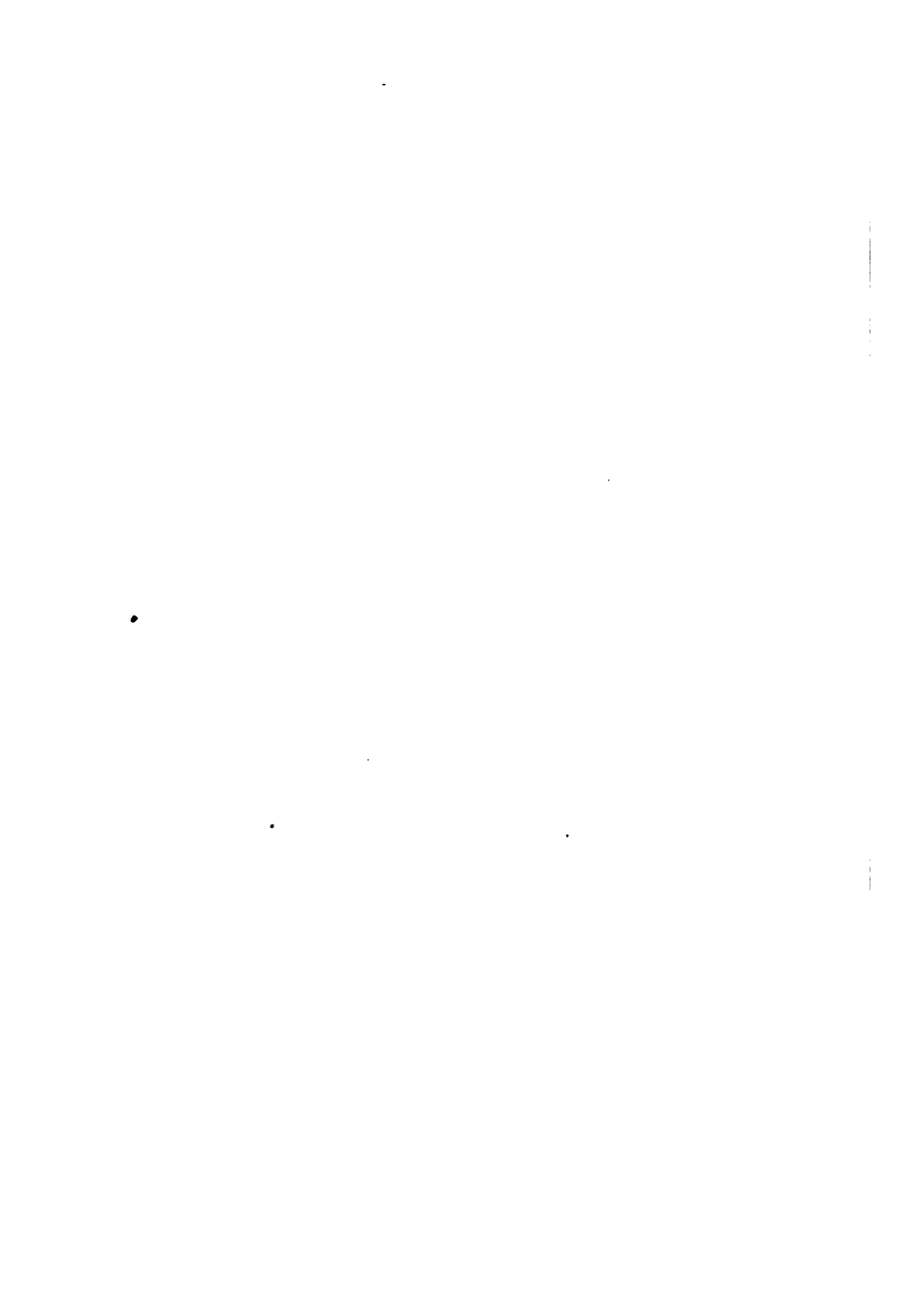
Charles could not proceed, his voice faltered, and he trembled with emotion. Without another word the two moved away mechanically from the spot, and walked slowly, irresolutely towards home. Coming at length to the street which led to their apartments, Bob halted. There was no trace of emotion in him, but his face was deadly pale, and all the features were rigid and immovable.

“Charles, we must never talk of this again. A word from you about it will decide me—I shall go away and never return. If this reaches other ears I shall take the same step. And now that you know my determination, I will tell you all that I dare tell. I am cursed with a crime, and I have had to bribe the only one on earth who knows what that crime is. My bond is nearly paid, and my worst difficulties are nearly over. But, Charles, there is a wound in my heart that will never be healed.—Don’t interrupt me, I know what you would say. No, all that is past. When I was a boy I had my chance, as you had, and took it, of being what I never can be now. But I am resigned to that—I *will* be resigned! My reputation is blasted, not in the eyes of the world, but what is the world to me compared with my own self-consciousness? My life must be a blank, but I have made it so, and I can bear it—I *will* bear it! All my schemes in life are useless, all my pleasures heartless, all my future blackness! But I have made it all so. Charles, your prophecy has soon come true, ‘Our future is what we make it.’”

“Oh, Bob! this is not the future we looked forward to then! We had bright, fresh, joyous hopes; and

though now your heart may be seared, and for the present all may seem thick darkness, there will be a break in the clouds. But, Bob, I warn you, do not abandon yourself to these unholy feelings. I promise you never to hint at to-night, never to breathe a word to a living soul of what I know or guess, but I will not promise to give you up, and see you straining and groaning beneath this dreadful burden and not seek to help you. I dare not do it, when I know that He who spoke peace to a malefactor on the cross, and forgave His own murderers, can and will give peace to you. I warn you, Bob, not to let this one sin drag you down into a life of sin. It may be that men think more of one crime than another, it is right they should, but God looks at the heart, and *all* unrighteousness is sin in His sight. Your life need not be a blank ; oh, Bob ! it must not be, it cannot be hereafter ! determine, in God's strength, it shall not be so now !”

Bob did not reply ; he took the hand of Charles and pressed it earnestly, and the rigid features relaxed, the warm blood rushed into the veins, the lips quivered, and a tear stole down the cheek. There was yet a door of Hope even in the Valley of Achor.



Chapter XII.



**" Be ready for all changes in thy fortune ;
Be coustant when they happen ; but above all
Mostly distrust good fortune's soothing smile :—
There lurks the danger, though we least suspect it ! "**

HAYARD.

**" On what strange grounds we build our hopes and fears ;
Man's life is all a mist, and in the dark
Our fortunes meet us !
Whether we drive, or whether we are driven,
If ill, 'tis ours ; if good, the act of Heaven ! "**

DRYDEN.

Captain Roe brings Strange News.

IT was a beautiful evening, about three months after the events detailed in the last chapter, and all our friends were on the Quay. Far out in the distance was a vessel making for the port, and, guided by the intelligence that the *Montague* had been signalled, our friends had little difficulty in guessing that the vessel which every moment neared them, although every moment seemed unusually long, was their old sea home.

"I wonder how much longer we shall be kept in suspense," said Edith; "I declare the dear old ship seems getting worn out, she ought to resign the sea, as well as her captain."

"If she ever becomes mine," said Charles, "I shall have her done up, and christened the *Edith Montague*; a pretty name, don't you think so? The *Montague*

gave an Edith to me, the least I can do is to give an Edith to her."

"I'm not given to punning," answered Edith, "but I don't think the *Montague* wants another *mast on*!"

Of course this produced the usual protestations; strange that a custom should prevail all over the world of always repudiating a pun, when it is invariably more enjoyed than studied wit. Strange too that there is nothing more catching than punning, if one begins another is sure to take it up; and so it was that the hour which intervened before the *Montague* came within close view was a very merry and jovial one. All were in high excitement, and when at last Captain Roe was seen on the deck waving his hat, they all commenced waving hats and handkerchiefs in return, and burst out into such a hearty salute of cheers as quite to astonish the fashionable folk who were strolling on the Quay.

Eagerly mounting the gangway as soon as the ship came alongside, our friends were not long in finding their way on deck, and never was a Captain greeted with a heartier welcome, and more unmistakeable delight.

"Come along," said Captain Roe, leading the way to the saloon, so well-known to some of his visitors,

"I am bewildered with the reception ; let us go below and say how-d'ye-do there."

Some managed to obey orders, but Charles found it impossible. Two of the youths who were middies in his time, and were now occupying the position of mates, seized him to shake hands. The same bo'son who had so often helped Charles in his lessons at splicing and bending came forward with a touch of the cap to say, "Lawks a mussy, Master Charles, how you're grow'd ; and how are yer, Sir ?" and a group of men,—the same old hands to whom Charles had often sung and danced on the forecastle,—crowded together to give him a salute, as he went into the cuddy.

Of course the saloon was a Babel ; everybody wanted to say something and ask something all at once ; there were introductions to make to passengers, and a thousand things to say and do, and no earthly possibility of fairly saying or doing them. Added to this, the Captain had a great deal to attend to, as captains always have as soon as their vessels come into port, and he could not give his guests the attention he would have liked.

"Charles," whispered Edith, "Captain Roe is losing nerve, he can be cool as a cucumber in a

tempest, but taking him by storm like this is an emergency he isn't prepared for. Had we not better go?

"I don't think we shall get a chance of a chat with him to-night if we don't," answered Charles; "and none of us will sleep till we hear the news from home."

And so they soon left the ship, but not until they had obtained the Captain's promise that he would be at Mr. Henderson's in about an hour's time.

True to his appointment, the Captain came.

"Now," said he, drawing up his chair to the table and putting on it a hand portmanteau which he had brought with him, "I have got so many things to tell you, and so many commissions to execute, I hardly know where to begin first."

"Begin with me," said Edith; "have you seen Mamma?"

"Yes, all were well, and looking out anxiously for next year, when they hope to sail. And here," opening the parcel, "are letters, and forget-me-nots, and all that sort of thing, for you. And here," passing a parcel to Edward, "is your share."

"Did you go to Ryslip, Captain?" asked Charles, as soon as he saw Edward and Edith hard at work,

looking over the little treasures of love which kind hands and loving hearts had prepared.

"Yes, I spent two whole evenings with Aunt Esther just before I came away. Charley, your Aunt is a wonderful woman; the truest, noblest model of unassuming goodness I ever knew. Here is a packet from her; but she isn't much given to letter writing, although I'll be bound what she says deserves to be printed in letters of gold."

"Ah! that it does, dear old soul!" said Charles, and he began to break the seal, and examine the contents of the packet.

"I spent a very pleasant hour or two with your good mother, Amesbury," said the Captain, turning to Bob; "she is better and stronger than she was when I saw her on my visit before; and I needn't tell you she revels over your long budgets, which she says she gets every mail. Here is a parcel for you too, and I see it is marked 'Photographs, with care,' so you have a present worth accepting."

And having given the "youngsters," as the Captain was pleased to call them, enough to amuse them and distract their thoughts from him for a little while, he succeeded in getting a quiet comfortable chat with

Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, who were burning to hear particulars about their friends, and receive mementoes of affection from them.

It was a happy evening, the sunshine had not beamed in Bob's face for many a long day as it did then; Edith and Edward seemed children in the old home together, and so near their mother and sisters, that the years which separated them were spanned in an hour; and Charles, sitting beside his father—for he could not think of him merely as a friend—and showing the little presents which Aunt Esther's own hands had prepared, felt and talked like a Ryslip schoolboy more than the Australian merchant-elect. There is no excitement in all the excitements of Colonial life which comes up to that of greeting those from the old country, who come fresh with news and glad tidings about friends and relatives there. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and such reminiscences increase the strength of love, and throw over it a feeling akin to that which we have when we lose those dear to us, and, forgetting all their blemishes, remember only their virtues; even so are our absent friends etherealized and glorified in memory.

It was not till after supper, and a long time after

steady sedate people ought to have retired, that Captain Roe found a chance of making any enquiries about his friends. But seizing the opportunity when a lull in the chorus of voices occurred, he asked,

“And how is our old friend Beetlebrow?”

“Well and hearty, happy and prosperous,” answered Charles; “he’s a fine fellow, Captain, and is as true and staunch to his colours as ever he was.”

“Beetlebrow is quite a hero with us,” said Edith; “I look upon him as one of my lawful guardians, and love him to a degree. He is such a faithful, good fellow—in short, he is the beau ideal of a sailor.”

“He’s a *Montague* man, Edith,” said the Captain smiling, “and I’m proud of it. I’ve got a wonderful story to tell you about Beetlebrow.”

“About Beetlebrow! oh, do tell it at once!” exclaimed Edith, all impatience.

“Well, one day when I was in London, at the Jerusalem coffee-house, keeping an appointment with some people on ship business, a gentleman came up to me, and said, ‘Are you Captain Roe, of the *Montague*?’ Of course I didn’t deny it. ‘Can you give me any information about a man who went out with you, a common seaman, the voyage before last;

his name was George Antliff?' 'Antliff, Antliff!' I said; 'No, I don't remember anyone of that name.' 'Perhaps he was known to you by the name of Beetlebrow?' said he. 'Oh, yes,' I said at once, 'I remember Beetlebrow well, a first-rate seaman and an honest man.' 'Well, it isn't about that I want to speak to you,' said he—for I suppose he thought I was going off in raptures, as Edith did just now—'My employer wants to know if he is still alive, and, if so, where he is?' 'Who is your employer?' said I. 'Mr. Adams, a solicitor in Lincoln's Inn,' said he, giving me a card. 'What does he want of him,' said I; 'what is the case?' 'Well, I don't know all the particulars,' said he, 'but this is the outline. George Antliff's grandfather was a seaman, but unlike most of his class he managed to scrape a little money together. He left the sea, married, and settled down in a village on the coast. But his married life was not happy, and his former habits had not prepared him for his new sort of existence. After a few years he left his wife and child and sailed to America. There he settled down again, and employed well what little capital he had. Years passed away, and he grew to be a rich man. He never kept up any correspondence

with his relations, and they were not aware that it was worth their while to keep up any correspondence with him. But when he had become quite an old man, he accidentally met with his son, the father of Beetlebrow, who was then in America, having retreated there it is supposed in consequence of some disagreeable affairs which obliged him to keep clear of England. Glad at seeing his own child again, and wishing to have some relations near him to make his last days comfortable (for his wife was dead), the old man made his son promise—that was after they had lived together for a year or so—to return to England and bring out his wife and family to settle in the home he had made, and promised in return to provide for them during his life, and leave his property among them at his death. Beetlebrow's father returned from his exile, and made a good voyage towards England; but, when nearing the coast, the weather was unusually violent, and the ship fell in with a tremendous gale which had been blowing for some days. The vessel was wrecked, and all on board were drowned; and, strange to say, the place of the wreck was just off the town where Antliff lived. His death had such an effect upon his wife, who accidentally found his body,

washed up on the shore, that she did not long survive him; in fact, if I remember rightly, they were both buried together. Yes, now I come to think of it,' he continued, 'they were,—and they were followed to the grave by their only child, a boy about eighteen or so, more or less. He seems to have left the village where he had been brought up, on the very day his father and mother were buried, and whether he took to the sea or went and drowned himself in a fit of melancholy, or what became of him was never known, till a few months ago, when a seaman who had sailed with you in the *Montague* happening to be at the village, heard about the enquiries which had been made for this man Beetlebrow, and recognised in one of his shipmates the heir of George Antliff, deceased.'"

"What a wonderful history!" exclaimed Edith, as Captain Roe paused, "Bill Beetlebrow heir-at-law to large American estates! And how wonderfully it all agrees too with the story he told of himself when you first knew him, Charles? Oh, how delighted I shall be to hear you tell him the story of his fortune, Captain; his face will shine like a furnace, and his eyes sparkle like diamonds."

“Not a bit of it,” said Charles, “he will look as blank as despair, and say, ‘Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.’ But he will make a good use of all he has, I am certain.”

“Well, Captain, and what is the end of the story?”

“Why, simply that I went straight away to Mr. Adams, of Lincoln’s Inn, confirmed the statements I heard from him, and learnt that it would be necessary for Beetlebrow to return to England as soon as he could, in order to go through some legal ceremonies; and I learnt, moreover, that the property of ‘George Antliff, deceased,’ as the clerk always persisted in calling him, amounted to something like three or four thousand pounds.”

“I don’t think we ought to be here enjoying this good news by ourselves,” said Mr. Henderson; and as if anticipating his remark, Bob, Charles, and Edward started to their feet. “Had we not better send for Beetlebrow, and all enjoy the story over again together?”

“Splendid!” cried Edith, clapping her hands in excited pleasure.

“Come, boys, trot away after him,” said the Captain, “but breathe a word about what he is wanted for at your peril!”

In little more than half-an-hour, a loud rat-tat announced that the "boys" had returned, and Beetlebrow's deep "Ha, ha!" which greeted some joke at his expense, announced to Edith, who was capering on the landing, and to the other members of the party who were waiting as eagerly as she, his arrival.

Bill Beetlebrow was a downright sailor; he could no more have looked upon Captain Roe in another light than "Captain," than he could have flown, or what would have been equally difficult, have been graceful. He could clasp Edith's white little hand in his large bony one, and he could shake hands with Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, for he had done it scores of times—for the fact of Bill's being a rough fisherman never hid the other fact from them that he was one of nature's nobleman—but as to shaking hands with Captain Roe, or approaching to familiarity with him, Bill felt it to be an impossibility, "that warn't the thing for the likes of him." Bill never hesitated to sit down at his ease on other occasions, but when the Skipper was there he stood awkwardly with his cap in his hand, rubbing the place where the nap ought to have been, and looking not unlike an overgrown schoolboy waiting to be thrashed.

Mrs. Henderson, who never thought of a sailor without associating grog in some form or another with him, thought the best way to break the ice would be to introduce some hot toddy; and after a little persuasion and very good manœuvering she arranged to get Beetlebrow comfortably seated, with a glass of grog by his side—"comfortably," that is, as far as the presence of the Skipper would allow him to be.

"Beetlebrow," said the Captain, after the grog had got into circulation, and the usual honours had been conferred, "I've got a long yarn to spin to you, and as you are to be the hero of it, give it all the attention it deserves."

The Captain then gave the story in all its details over again—never once halting, and never once being interrupted. The group would have been a good study for a painter. Beetlebrow staring with an aghast stare, like that of a man suddenly awakened out of sleep, his mouth open as if exclamations ready formed were there keeping it ajar till they found utterance; his big chest rising and falling at each deep breath, his hands fumbling away at his dilapidated cap as if the will of 'George Antliff, deceased,' was stitched in the lining and he dared not be seen

undoing it. And the grouping of the family party was just the thing for a telling picture. There was Captain Roe with his sun-burnt face, bending forward in the chair telling his tale, the merry twinkle of his eyes and the quiet play about his mouth, treacherously revealing that the story would end well. There was Charles, sitting next to the Captain, his restless eye turning every moment from the speaker to Beetlebrow, and then to Edith, who was standing beside his chair leaning gently on his shoulder, her long hair falling and resting upon his. Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, sat together with hands joined, looking like old-fashioned lovers, and unspeakable satisfaction beaming in their generous looks, and were intent upon keeping Edith's pet dog, Carlo, which Mrs. Henderson had in her lap, from interrupting the proceedings with any frivolity. Bob and Edward, with their arms resting on the table, sat next to Beetlebrow, and the earnest, meditative face of Bob, and the genial hearty-looking face of Edward, were both lit up with every variety of pleasurable expression. Add to this the general comfortable aspect of the room, the lamp on the table throwing just the right light on all the expectant looks, and you have the picture complete.

“And now,” said the Captain, as he came to the end of the tale, having carried the plot carefully through and never omitted one, “says he,” or “says I,” where it could possibly be introduced—“and now, Beetlebrow, all that remains to be done is for you to go to London and claim the property, as lawful grandson and next of kin.”

“The Lord’s will be done !” said Beetlebrow, and he drew a long breath, as if to gain strength to bear some heavy cross. “It ain’t for me to complain ; I ’spose I ought to be uncommon joyful, but I’ve always bin provided for—leastways, I’ve always had ways made for me to provide for myself, and that’s all as I’ve ever wanted, and I don’t know whatsomever I shall do with all that power o’ money.”

“Then I’ll tell you what to do, Beetlebrow,” said Charles, unable to restrain a smile at his old friend’s simple-heartedness, “marry a nice-looking, decent woman, who will be a helpmeet for you, and settle down comfortably. But apart from that, I know you’ll be able to find a hundred thousand ways of spending your money well, because you will take it as so much given to you by the great Master to trade with for Him.”

“ Ah ! that’s it, Mast’r Charles—that’s it !” said Beetlebrow, the real value of the legacy striking him all of a sudden—“ that’s it. Lawks ! I’ll build a Sailor’s Home and a Seamen’s Mission, and pay for a reg’lar clergyman to come and preach, and—Praise the Lord !” he exclaimed, smacking his thigh and bringing the sentence to a close somewhat hastily, in order to express his thankfulness.

“ Then, Bill, you won’t mind going away from us all, and running all the risk of a voyage to England ?” asked Edith.

“ Well, Miss Edith, as for the matter of the risk, there ain’t no more o’ that than I should have anywhere, for the sea and the land is all the same to Him as owns it ; and as for the going away, you see, Miss Edith, it ain’t much as a poor fisherman can do to help his mates in this ’ere world, and now that the Lord has said, ‘ Bill, here’s the world’s gear for you to lay out well for me,’ I hope, Miss Edith, I ain’t the man to say that I’ll make out my own way, rather than follow in the way He has made out for me.”

“ Beetlebrow, I feel sure you will do right in going, and that as soon as you can,” said the Captain, “ so

come round to me to-morrow or next day, and I will give you all the help and information I can."

"Thank'ye, Sir; from my heart thank'ye," said Bill, rising, and again becoming restless and uneasy as the consciousness of the Captain's presence, (which the excitement of the news had partially shaken off,) returned, and wishing for a more retired place to think over the strange history which had just been told him, he precipitately withdrew.

It was very late when the friendly party broke up; so late, that although Captain Roe had, as he assured them, some more very important news to relate, he would not sound a syllable of it until the following evening, when they could all meet together again. It was useless to object to suspense; it was in vain for Edith to pretend to hide the Captain's hat, and to stroke his whiskers and coax him; he was resolute, and a suppressed yawn from Mr. Henderson, which involuntarily escaped, confirmed him in his purpose.

All were tantalised when the moment arrived to separate for the night, and the Captain was heard to declare, that the news he had reserved was even more generally interesting than that he had already told.

There was no help for it, however, but to wait. Charles and Bob buoyed themselves up with the expectation that they would be able to draw out an idea of what the revelation was to be as they walked with him to his hotel, but they were doomed to disappointment. Telling them, that "common honesty demanded that he should not let the cat out of the bag till all were present," he dismissed them with a cordial good-night.

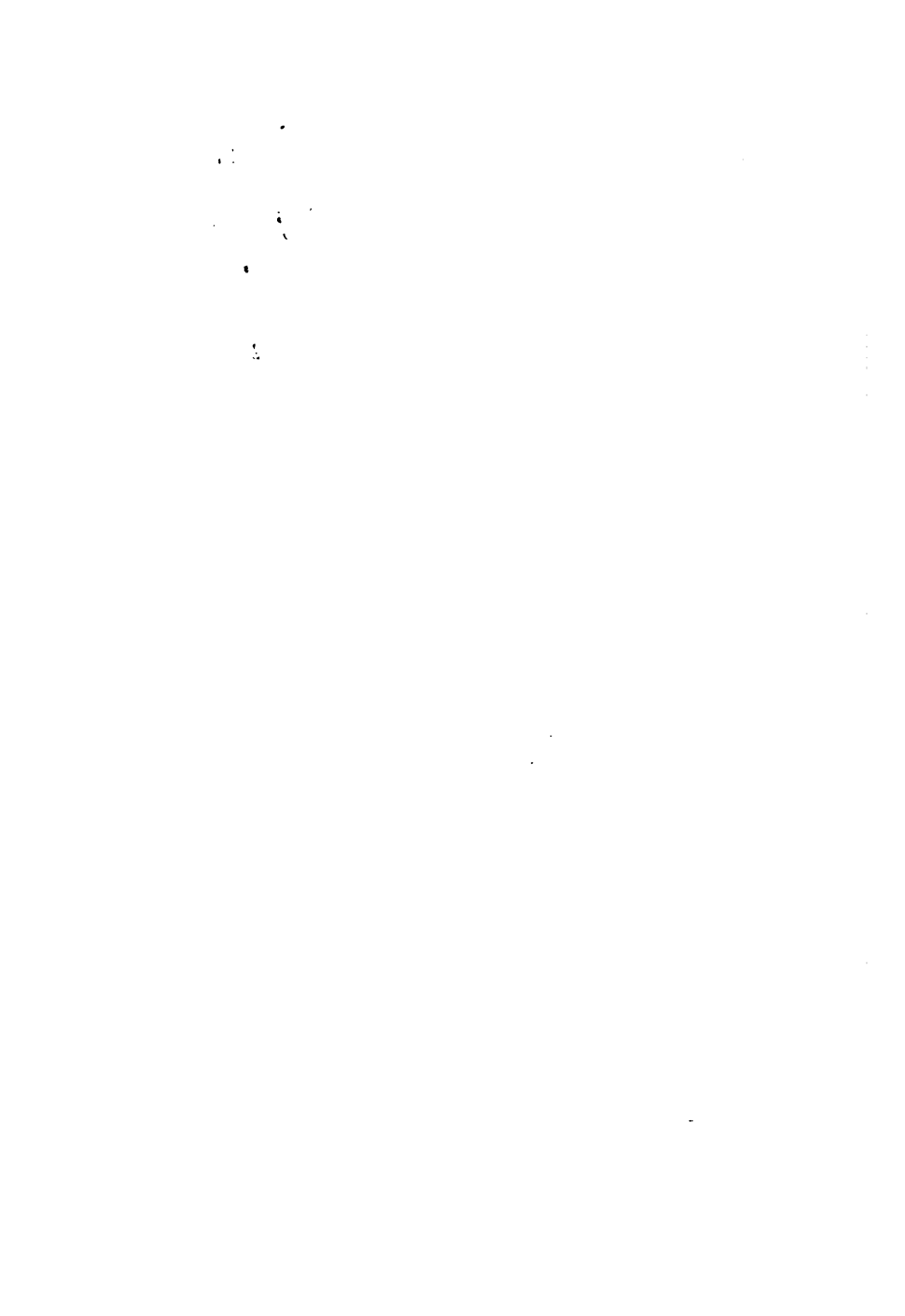
When Charles and Bob arrived at Laburnam Cottage, they sat down quietly to read over their letters from Ryslip, before going to bed. "What can Aunt Esther mean?" said Charles, as he held her letter in his hand; "she says, 'You will be glad to know that Rover is still alive and well, although getting rather old and worn out, but he is just the same faithful old fellow, and I am told prowls about Dell Farm, as if he expected to see his old master there again.' Bob, I thought you told me in one of your letters, Rover went mad, and you shot him?"

"So I did," answered Bob, shortly, and as he spoke he crushed up the letter he held in his hand, and trembled violently.

“ Why, Bob, you are ill? you look as pale as death, what is the matter?—not bad news, I hope?”

“ Yes, bad news !—terrible news!” he said hoarsely, and hastily rising, he shook hands with Charles as he passed, said good-night abruptly, and retired to his room.





Chapter XIII.



“There's a divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them how we will.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.”

COWPER.

An Unexpected Treat.

THE next evening found our friends assembled together to take up the thread of the news which had been commenced and darkly hinted at on the previous evening. Captain Roe was not a deep man; it usually happened that every thing he had to say, he said off without making any ado about the matter; mystery was as little an element of his character as reserve was of the character of Charles. And the peculiarity of his making a mystery about what he had to tell them, kept all on the tip-toe of excitement until the chairs were drawn round and conversation commenced.

“Well,” said the Captain, trying to look as mysterious as his frank, open countenance would let him, “you all know that I have made my last voyage; that the *Montague* will henceforth be under fresh

command, and that as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, Charles and I are to commence business together?"

"Hear, hear!" said Edward Marston, as the least formal way of expressing approbation.

"But you do not all know," continued the Captain, merely knitting his brow in mock displeasure at the interruption, "that at least four or five months must elapse before those arrangements can be satisfactorily made. Now, unless I can find full occupation on shore, I shall be like a fish out of water, and so I propose taking one more voyage."

"No, Captain, you don't mean to say that?" said Edith, and she moved towards the Captain as if she thought he was going off in a twinkling, and she would retard his progress.

Charles did not know what to make of the announcement, so he did the wisest thing he could under the circumstances, he held his peace.

"But the voyage I propose," said the Captain, gently motioning Edith to a seat by his side, "is not again to England; it is not even a purely business trip. I propose going to New Zealand to see my son James."

Here Captain Roe paused, and looked round on the company, to see the effect of his statement. It must be confessed no great amount of interest was manifested by anybody; they had all expected to hear something much more startling, and their countenances told more plainly than words would have done, that they felt disappointed and taken in. Edith could not restrain her feeling about the matter, and said in a very dejected tone of voice, "Is that all?"

"Nearly, but not quite: I propose taking the *Montague* there, as she is not likely to be wanted for the regular line for some little time; but now the cream of my plan has to come. I propose taking all of you with me, every man jack of you if you'll go, so that before retiring from the sea and command, we may all have a pleasant holiday voyage together."

"Oh, Captain! you dear man!" cried Edith, fairly skipping about in glee, "what a delightful idea! the thing I should like above all others! Aunt, may I go?"

"I don't think Captain Roe is serious, and I don't know what you want to go to New Zealand for," said Mrs. Henderson. "Not tired of us all here yet, Edith, are you?"

"No, Aunt, you know I am not; but it would be such a treat for all of us to go on a pleasure trip with the Captain, and have the whole run of the ship; and then to see some of the glorious scenery of New Zealand, snow capped mountains, and sights we never see here!"

"You would astonish the natives, Edith, I'm certain," laughed Charles, "they would think you were going to show them something new in the war-dance way. But, Captain, tell us more of your plan. Who does it include?"

"You, of course, and Edith, and our kind friends Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, and Bob Amesbury, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, if they can be persuaded to come out of their quiet life again, which I fear is doubtful. I told you the trip was not purely a business one; that is to say, I find it necessary to go there, and there is a good deal of business I shall have to combine with it. It might be done by another skipper, but I have looked forward to this as a pet project; and as I have spent all my life on the sea for business, I should like my farewell trip to be with my friends on pleasure, and I'm sure a holiday will do you all good."

"Neither Bob nor I have had one since we have been in Australia," said Charles, "neither has Edith, unless it may be said that all her life is holiday-time; and as for Edward, he has been working away, in business hours and after, and I'm sure he wants a change. Why, Captain, do you know we had only been planning a week or two ago to make a trip together this season, and had proposed going to Sydney, and then up the country a bit, but this will be infinitely better."

"Well, there will be a good deal to arrange first," said the Captain, "but I have made sure of leave of absence for you, Charles, because, as you know, your present engagement expires shortly; and you, Edward, must focus your wits to see how arrangements will stand affected between you and your uncle. As for Edith, I mean to plead with all the arguments I can bring together for her, and Amesbury appears so very unwell, and is evidently in want of a change, so that there will be little doubt about him. And now, my good friends," said the Captain, turning to Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, "what do you say?"

"I say that the project is just like yourself, Captain," said Mr. Henderson, "and deserves all the

attention we can give it. I should like it amazingly, and so would my old lady, but I do not see any possibility of our both leaving together. However, we will think over it, and see what can be done. I should like Edith to go certainly, and I don't see any reason why she should not: do you, my dear?"

"None whatever," said Mrs. Henderson; "and when do you propose starting, Captain?"

"In about a fortnight at the earliest, or it may be three weeks; but I will make all arrangements in the course of a day or two."

It need hardly be said that there was a great deal of pleasant fun that evening, and a great many wild-goose plans proposed, and no end of romantic adventures imagined. None of us, unless we have gone very far down the vale, ever have a journey proposed to us suddenly, or see the probability of an unexpected holiday without feeling a rush of the old childish pleasure we felt at such a prospect in our young days; and none of us, unless we have hearts like brickbats, can witness the excitement of young people in anticipated pleasure, without sharing in their enjoyment. And so it was, that all the friends that evening were more like a party of schoolboys

and girls on the eve of a holiday pic-nic, than sober-sided men of business and matrons.

A few days only intervened before definite answers to the invitation were given. Mr. Henderson found that it would be perfectly impossible for him to leave business at the same time with Edward; they had worked together so well, that either could have managed the business in the absence of the other, but if both left no one could supply their place. Mrs. Henderson, for many reasons which need not be specified, did not at all care to undertake such a journey; besides which, she was a wretched sailor, and therefore abominated the sea. Both of them were anxious that Edith should go, and yet they thought it would be hardly proper for her to do so, unless she were accompanied by her brother.

Bob had little difficulty in obtaining leave of absence; had any pleading been necessary, his pale, haggard face would have been the best advocate.

And so it was arranged that the four young people should be the Captain's companions in his farewell trip.

A vessel was just about that time sailing for England, and Beetlebrow (who thought that the sooner his "bit o' bisness" was completed, the

better), determined to leave with her. From the time he heard of his good fortune, up to the time when he waved his hat from the deck of the vessel as she sailed out of harbour, Beetlebrow never showed that he felt perfectly clear as to his position about the legacy. He certainly did not murmur, nor did he show any extravagant joy. No doubt if a relative had died and left him a small family of orphan children, he would have treated the matter in exactly the same way. He looked upon the whole affair as a mystery of Providence which he could not fathom, and he accepted the responsibility with a cheerful kind of solemnity.

The night before the vessel sailed, Charles went to Beetlebrow's hut, and spent a few hours with him. It was arranged that later in the evening, Bob and Edward should join the party, and have a small demonstration by way of farewell.

"And when do you think of returning, Beetlebrow?" asked Charles, as they sat together on the two boxes containing all the worldly goods, chattels, and effects of the heir-at-law. "I suppose it hardly depends upon you, eh? You'll have to study *her* wishes."

"Whose, Mast'r Charles?"

"Whose? why Mrs. Beetlebrow's, to be sure! You don't mean to be a bachelor all your days, I know Bill; and I suppose, now you've come into property, you'll be casting about for some one to share it with you?"

"I'm getting an old man, Sir, and——"

"So am I, but I'm not an old man yet. You're far from being an old man, Bill, why you're not more than forty or so—just in your prime; and it's every man's duty to marry who has the chance."

"I know you think so, Mast'r Charles, and I shouldn't wonder if Miss Edith thought so too," said Beetlebrow, with a sly wink; "but they say marriages is made in heaven, and no word has come down to earth about it for me yet awhiles. But I must say as I've often had a notion it 'ud be a nice thing to have some good 'ooman to help me on the way, and to get a bit of a home like together; and if ever I had come across one as would have been what I think a missus should be, I don't know if I shouldn't ha' asked to come and settle down here. Hows'ever, these things is always ordered for us, if we let 'em alone in the right way. But, Mast'r Charles, I want to

“speak to you about Mr. Amesbury. The Captain was kind enough to talk to me the other day, and he spoke about him, and he says, ‘Beetlebrow, Amesbury looks ten years older than when I was here last time,’ says he.”

“He does, Bill, and I feel very anxious about him. I don’t know what to do for the best. I am very glad he is going for this trip to New Zealand, a change of scene and air will do him good, but I fear it is not physical change he needs half so much as a change of thought.”

“Mast’r Charles, it ain’t right to break confidences, nor to tell about things which warn’t meant to be know’d, but I want to tell you something about Mr. Bob. One night he come down here to see after his nets, which was broke, and he set down and mended ’em here on the doorstep, and I set down here doing a job o’ splicing. And I says to him, just casual, ‘Those was good days, Mr. Bob, when the Master set with His fishermen disciples as they mended their nets.’ ‘Ah ! you’re right, Bill,’ says Mr. Bob, ‘I wish that for one hour He could come to us now. One hour’s talk with Him, one moment’s direct questioning of Him, would clear up a life-time of doubt !’

Now I must say I didn't think to hear Mr. Bob talk in that there way, for he most in general laughs or jokes now if anything is said about the Master; and so I took up what he said, and I says, 'Mr. Bob, the Master didn't go away till He had finished all He had to do here for men, and if He were to come here this very minute, and you was to ask Him all the questions as ever you could think on—about the soul's doubt at any rate—He'd say, Go to Calvary, and then I'll talk with yer.' And so from one thing to another we got on a-talking, and I tried to speak a faithful word for the Master, and Mr. Bob didn't seem put out, but he asked me some questions—sticklers, some of 'em was, Mast'r Charles—but I did all as I could to answer 'em, and when I said off His own blessed words (the very words you said off to me, and thank God for it, when I was in the dark), 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' Mr. Bob sighed and said, 'Bill, says he, I wish it was true.' 'It is true, Mr. Bob,' I says, 'my heart tells me it's true, even though I ain't got the words to tell it you. God can't lie,' I says, 'and that is God's word.' And then, Mast'r Charles, we got on a-talking about that passage

of the blessed book, and he said some queer things about belief, and I says, 'Never mind about belief, Mr. Bob, *believe*.' And then he talked about the word 'whosoever,' and I told him as the dying thief, and the woman taken in 'dultery, and Peter, and Saul, was all among 'em, and then I said to him those solemn words, 'whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

Bill paused for a minute or two, and Charles said,

"I'm very thankful to hear this, Bill. God grant your words may be useful to him. But go on, what else did you talk about? "

"Why, Sir, I'm a'most ashamed to tell the rest. Mast'r Bob says, 'Bill,' says he, 'call on that name for me.' I was dumb-founded like, Mast'r Charles, I never spoke out a prayer in my life for any body to hear, and though I felt a great deal I didn't know what to *say*. But I know'd most o' that prayer of David's by heart, after he had done his dreadful sin, and I said that; and then I said off that hymn as you learnt me on the *Montague* :—

'Rock of ages, cleft for me;'

and when I finished Mr. Bob took hold o' my hand and shook it very hearty, and says, 'Thank'e, Bill;'

and I thought his eyes looked reddish, and fancied p'rhaps God had spoken to his heart. But after a while Mr. Bob got gloomy and out o'sorts, and seemed sorry as he had been outspoken, and I saw the enemy was sowing tares as hard as ever he could; and so I thought it was best not to say too much. I think, Mast'r Charles, there's as much harm done in saying too much as there is in not saying enough, sometimes, so I let him take his own way. But I couldn't go away without telling you this, Mast'r Charles, just to give you hopes, and to ask you to try and get Mr. Bob to talk to you about such likes.”

“Many thanks, Bill; I am very glad you have told me. Poor Bob! there is but one thing that will do him good; he is weary and heavy laden, and he wants rest for the soul!”

None knew better than Charles how much this rest was needed. A terrible suspicion had been lurking in his mind ever since the hour when they sat together reading the Ryslip letters, and Bob had told him he had received bad news. Many things had tended to strengthen this suspicion—Bob refused to tell him what the bad news was, reminded him that he had promised never to refer to “that affair,” and Charles

was not conscious that he had in any way referred to it. And as he pondered over the scene when he had been with Bob on that terrible night, a floating thought he then had settled down into a solid belief. He had seen the face of that stranger before, where he could not remember; but some mysterious association of ideas had recalled him to memory. And Charles recognised in the face of the stranger a man well-known in Ryslip as a low fellow, whose living was obtained by poaching and other nefarious habits.

"Mast'r Charles," said Bill, interrupting the thoughts which were running through the mind of Charles, "you're a scholard, and you know more about what goes on in the heads o' your sort o' young men than me; they don't see things as we kind o' folks do, and they don't think as we do, and so you know how to get at 'em. Don't give up Mr. Bob and Mr. Edward, work for 'em, speak to 'em, pray for 'em, never give up, Mast'r Charles; string up the right sort o' words to say to them in their way as God taught you how to say to me in my way; and while you work, Mast'r Charles, I'll pray, and something tells me God 'll bless 'em and lead 'em right. These are my on'y cares

in going away, and I couldn't ha' gone afore saying it."

Beetlebrow spoke hurriedly and shook hands fervently as he did so, for he heard footsteps on the path, and in a minute afterwards Bob and Edward came into the hut.

"There's few men o' my stamp," said Bill, as the arrivals threw their boat-cushions on the floor, and then comfortably seated themselves, "as ha' bin more honoured in their life than me. It's quite a new thing for a common seaman to be going to sea and a host of gentlefolk to welcome him off."

"I'm precious sorry you are going, Bill," said Amesbury, "and the sooner you come back the better. If it wasn't that we were so soon going for our trip, I think I should hire this hut and come and live here, to try and catch the spirit of its late owner."

"Ah!" said Bill, looking round the apartment, "it's a queer little berth, but I shall never forget it, 'cos the best of my days has been spent here. Lor! Mast'r Charles, what a poor benighted heathen I was when I first come here, and I ain't got nothing to boast of now about myself; but I can boast in His

goodness and mercy. Many's the time the Master has come and talked to me here, and I've know'd Him to be inside these 'ere four walls as well as if He'd show'd Hisself to me, as He did after the resurrection. God be thanked, Mast'r Charles, and all the poor thanks I can give I owes to you, for if it hadn't bin for you I should never ha' know'd Him."

"No thanks are due to me, Bill, I owe unbounded thanks to Him for being permitted to help you."

"Well," said Bill, "I hope we shall all work for the Master. I mean to have a try at it in my way along o' the hands on the forecastle the same as you did, Mast'r Charles; and please God spare us all to meet again, I hope it'll be that we shall all be able to say that we ha' bin happy in His service, and have all had rest to our souls. And if we don't meet no more here—and there's no tellin'—may we all meet afore His throne. But there," said Bill, seeing that Bob looked fidgetty, and not best pleased with the turn conversation had taken, "there, I ain't going to preachify, only I felt downhearted somehow at going away, and I thought saying good wishes would set me square."

After a pleasant interchange of mutual good wishes,

and some merry banter about the future prospects of B. Beetlebrow, Esq., the farewell was given. With the next day's tide our old friend was on his voyage to England.





Chapter XIV.



“ The heart that bleeds
From any stroke of fate, or human wrongs,
Loves to disclose itself, that list'ning pity
May drop a healing tear upon the wound.”

MASON.

“ And friends, dear friends, when it must be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep ;
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say ‘ Not a tear must o’er him fall ;
He giveth His beloved sleep.’ ”

E. B. BROWNING.

The Last Voyage.

THERE is no place like the sea for enjoyment. Its healthful influence invigorates, and if the system has lost its elasticity, it restores and exhilarates it; if weary, and worn out with cares and duties, it gives new, fresh life. The weak man feels strong as he rides upon its crested wave; the weary feels at rest, rocked in the cradle of the deep; the strong feels the sublimity of strength, as he walks the deck, battling with the winds. The sea is all things to all men. Do we love tranquillity?—It is there. The calm eventide, when the sails cease to flap, and the voice of the sea is hushed to a whisper; when the glassy waves are tinted with a golden hue, and the sun is sinking in the western horizon,—there is the ideal of peace. Do we love activity?—There is the dashing wave, fringed with its snow-white

foam ; the steady breeze which stirs the spirit to its depths ; the gallant ship, struggling with an almost human energy through the tossing waves ; the "voice mysterious " which speaks of power and life. Do we love study ?—There is ever fresh food for thought. The pathway of nations, the chain which links the world in brotherhood, the great thoroughfare of commerce, the equaliser of temperatures, the vast treasury of waters to cleanse the air, feed the clouds, refresh the thirsty earth, and give life and beauty to all nature. There is a page of wonder, whose depths a life-study of the unwritten word could not fathom. Do we love thoughtful worship ?—The sea is His, and He made it. His way is in the deep, His path is in the great waters. His name is written on the illumined sky, His spirit hovers over the mysterious depths. His voice thunders in the crash of waters, or whispers in the gentle ripple of the waves. His likeness is reflected in the broad mirror, "where the Almighty's form glasses itself in tempests." Emblem of God and man, time and eternity, life and death ; its lessons are God's own sermons, and the thoughts it inspires are prayers and praise.

The *Montague* had been out many days, and such days of unmingled pleasure our friends had rarely, if ever, spent before. All were in high spirits, their thoughts and feelings were in harmony with the scenes around. Now the merry game, or the feats of strength; now the quiet evening hour of meditation; now the deck walk, and its ever fruitful subjects of conversation. Sometimes music, sometimes books, sometimes argument, but nothing flat or wearisome; every pleasure had a soul in it, rest and recreation were filled with the spirit of life.

It was a lovely evening, warm and balmy, and an almost imperceptible breeze bore the *Montague* quietly and steadily along. Now and again the sails flapped lazily, and then spread themselves out, as if sporting with the wind. Chairs and rugs were spread about the deck, the usual sign of an evening's quiet recreation. Edith, upon pretence of being busy (an infatuated idea which seems ingrained in the female mind), had some fancy wool-work in her lap, which was nothing more or less than a pair of slippers for the Captain, in a very early stage of progress. Bob (who had so altered for the better in the past few days, that the colour had returned to his cheeks, and his eyes sparkled

with their old lustre), had a book in his hand, "Mrs. Browning's Poem's," which he was pretending to read. Charles and Edward were examining a map of New Zealand, and pencilling out how much they would be able to "do" during their visit; and the Captain, with a large desk before him, was engaged in that most interesting of all occupations—looking over old letters, tearing up the worthless, and sorting away the treasured ones. As he tore up one letter, he sighed, half aloud, half to himself. Edith looked up from her work, it was full five minutes since conversation had been general, and that was rather an unusual event.

"Have you come across an old love-letter, Captain?" she asked.

"No, Edith, a letter from a man whom I haven't seen for thirty years, and I dare say never shall again. He and I were boys on our first sea-trip together."

"But what made you sigh, Captain, in that doleful way?"

"I hardly know,—I was thinking of the history of life; how it is entwined in other lives, and how the thread may be broken, but is never lost. What:

a mysterious, and I was going to say fearful thing, influence is !”

“Do you think so? I think it is one of the most glorious thoughts, that as our minds have been moulded by others, so we are engaged in moulding the characters of those around us; that as our breath is ever leaving us to mingle with the atmosphere, so our influence is ever issuing forth on its mysterious and solemn errand to mingle with universal life.”

“Ah! and if the influence is always good, it is a glorious thought; but is not every human heart a fountain which throws out bitter water and sweet? Do we not all find a law within ourselves, that when we would do good, evil is present with us; and even though we regret the evil, does it not still go on its course, travelling with its deadly mission, till the end of time?”

“That is unless checked by Him who can say, ‘Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.’ But surely you think that in the case of your friend, whose letter you have just torn up, your influence upon him has ceased?”

“No, I think not, for this simple reason—his influence upon me has not ceased; I remember him,

and his letter has given rise to these thoughts. I cannot say whether that influence was 'good or bad, although probably it was both."

"I remember a quotation, I think, from Professor Hitchcock's curious book," said Bob, closing Mrs. Browning's poems, and settling himself beside Edith's chair.—" 'Influence makes us as if we were linked to every created being by a golden chain, and every pulsation of our heart or movement of our mind, modified the pulsation of every other heart, and the movement of every other mind.' And I have heard an argument about the perpetuity of influence like this;— 'Tom Paine before his death, deplored that he had ever published the 'Age of Reason,' and advised others not to read it. But the book and its sentiments still exist, perpetuating the author's bad influence; the recantation still exists, perpetuating his good influence. One does not annihilate the other, both live, both work, and will continue to do so while time lasts."

"I read Hitchcock's book," said the Captain, "and I think I never felt more impressed with the solemnity of life than I did then. It is a solemn thought, full of hope and fear, that our little actions,

and our passing words, shall live when we have passed away, and feed or poison the hearts of men."

"Influence," said Edith, "is like the grain of wheat that was wrapped up for three thousand years in an Egyptian mummy, and when at last it found a congenial soil, it sprung up and bore fruit. But do you think that when at last we stand before God, and have to answer for our actions, that we shall be responsible for all the consequences of our actions too?"

Captain Roe was silent, and the reply devolved upon Edward.

"If your theory holds good," answered Edward, "it is a fearful thought to be confronted at last with those who have been injured through all ages by our influence. But if it is true that there is '*now* no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,' surely there can be no condemnation *then*, and therefore no responsibility. But the enquiry has gone beyond my reach," he added, in a sad tone.

"All we can know about that event said the Captain, is that every one will be judged according to his deeds; but the Advocate is the sin-bearer, and He puts all our sins and their consequences away."

Conversation paused after this, but a train of

thought was started, and each carried it on in his own mind. Charles had listened attentively without taking any part in the discussion, and his quiet thoughts differed from those of the others. He was thinking how singular it was that Bob should have said what he had said; what unseen, unknown influence was going on in his mind? had the simple words of Beetlebrow graven themselves in his heart? And then came a struggle of thought in his mind, "What has been my influence on Bob? Have I conscientiously acted a brother's part towards him? or have I sought more to influence strangers than my own friend?" And Charles remembered how he had spoken to Bob sometimes, but only under the influence of strong emotion called up under painful scenes; he remembered how he had often intended to seek opportunity to lead him into thoughtful conversation, and had let the opportunities slip. He knew how much easier it was to converse with a stranger than with a friend, and felt mortified that it was so. He thought of Beetlebrow's charge to him, and now that they were thrown so much together, now that the influences around them were so congenial to freedom of thought and speech, now that there

seemed an opening for him to lead his friend, he determined that he would exert his influence, and try to make this trip one of real use and real pleasure.

That night a stiff breeze sprung up, and after all the others had retired to rest, Bob, who shared the same cabin with Charles, announced his intention to put on an overcoat and take a stroll to see how things were going on; and Charles very gladly offered to join him.

"Unless I'm a thorough-bred land-lubber," said Bob, "I think we shall have bad weather before our trip is over. The Captain hinted at it before he turned in to-night."

"I shouldn't be surprised if we do. So much the better, we shall have a taste of all weathers then, and that is one of the charms of a voyage."

"It is; but I like the roughish weather best. As somebody says, it rouses 'thoughts beyond the reaches of the soul,' and shows us 'symbols of almighty power.' The power of God, I think, is the attribute which most reveals God, because we never see power without mercy."

"Nor mercy without love. A storm at sea, when the ship is buffeted by waves, and every angry billow

threatens destruction, yet preserved through it all and carried at last into gentle waters and a safe haven, is a glorious type of the soul struggling in the storms of life, upheld from destruction and brought into peace."

"Yes; both speak of almighty power, seen not less in the moral world than in the physical. And I suppose that is the right idea—utter helplessness in man, infinite resource in God."

"That is it, Bob, that is the revelation. But do tell me," asked Charles, unable to check his joyful surprise to hear so much of his friend's thought so freely expressed, "do tell me how it is you have changed your estimate of His character and man's?"

"I don't know, Charles, but lately I have changed many of my thoughts about Him. I have felt within the past few days as I have not felt since I was a child and believed everything. I haven't had the pressure of *that load* as I used, but perhaps when this dream of joy is over, it is to return with tenfold force. And yet I hope not, I pray not. Charles, do you remember our conversation that night, when we played chess? I shall never forget it, never. I have felt since then that God changes not; He could not

change and be God, but my thoughts of Him have changed; and I have tried, He only knows how hard, to realize that I may yet come to Him, and be made alive from moral, and mental, and spiritual death."

"Indeed you may, Bob, I feel sure you will. He has given you these thoughts of Himself, He will strengthen and confirm them. Then life is not the blank it was?"

"I dare hardly venture to say; I dread to think of the future, I hate to look at the past; I live only in the present. It is a brighter and happier present than I have deserved; but it will not last long, it cannot. God is Law, and He will not suspend law for me; and whatsoever a man has sown that shall he also reap. But come what may, I will hope on."

"I wish I could help you, Bob. Can I not help you bear the burden, is there nothing I can do to make the future brighter?"

"You have done much, Charley; from childhood you have been my true friend; in my trouble you have proved your friendship. Had it not been for you, I dare not think where or what I should have been at this moment. And Beetlebrow, his pure,

simple, consistent life has been an argument which no arguments or sophistries could refute, and he has tried to help me, and in such a noble, holy spirit, that I have felt if man can bear such love to man's soul, surely God must bear a greater love; and I feel He does, although I dare not, cannot say as yet that I fully realize it."

A peal of thunder at that moment startled the speakers, and when its solemn roll had echoed through the mighty dome, Bob said, laying his hand on the shoulder of Charles as he spoke,—

"That is always the sequel to these thoughts, Charley. The voice of mercy is a still small voice, and it is succeeded by the voice of wrath which drowns its whisper. No, it is not fancy, it is truth. Something within tells me it is truth. I never hear the voice saying to me, 'Mercy belongeth unto God,' but I hear afterwards the voice of thunder, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.'"

Charles was about to reply, when Captain Roe, roused by the peal of thunder, came upon deck.

"This is what I expected," said he, looking round the horizon; "I thought we should not continue as pleasantly as we have begun. We shall have bad weather!"

"A storm, I suppose?" asked Charles.

"Not a storm as you landsmen understand it. I don't know what that thunder means, there is little indication of a regular thunder-storm, but we shall have a breeze you might hold a razor to, before morning." And walking up to the compass, he examined it minutely, then exchanged a few words with the man at the wheel, and in a minute or two afterwards, he was bellowing orders at the top of his voice, and active preparations were being made for shortening sail, and preparing for "a night of it."

Barely were the orders given, when a squall struck the ship. In an instant the waters were lashed into a sheet of foam, through which the *Montague* rushed with a mad speed; the masts bent like willow wands, and the yard-arms nearly touched the water as she bowed to the angry blast. Fearing lest any of the port-holes in the cabins might have been left open as the night was very warm, Charles and Bob hastily ran down, just in time to discover Edward struggling hard to keep out the rush of water by cramming his pillow into the port-hole, and looking, in his half-drowned condition, as if he had been fished up out of the depths of the sea. No injury, however, was done

and in answer to the rather anxious questions of Edith and her attendant, whether there was danger, Charles felt at liberty to say, "Only a squall, Edith, no damage done, except a ducking for Edward!"

But Edith, not knowing the hour of the night, and hearing the voices of so many who were astir, was not to be put off quietly in that way. She at once arose, and hastily dressing as well as the rolling of the ship would allow her, joined the friends who were sitting in the cuddy, and who were not at all surprised to see her issue forth. An hour or two passed, during which time the wind and waves both rose, and the ship pitched with great force; but being assured by the Captain there was no danger, and that land would not be seen probably before late the next evening, they accepted his advice and retired.

Next morning it was found that the weather was "as thick as a hedge," so dense that it was impossible to see from one end of the ship to the other. All through the day the Captain never left the deck, and it must be confessed his countenance somewhat betrayed his feeling, for as a doctor is more fidgetty and nervous if any of his own family are ill, so a

captain is more anxious with half-a-dozen friends or relatives on board than with a ship full of ordinary passengers. About half-past four in the afternoon, that awful cry ran through the ship, "Breakers ahead!" It really seemed more to be a guess than a matter of actual sight, for the haze was very thick. Soundings were taken, and after a short time the haze lifted and plainly revealed the land. It was a terrible discovery!—the shore was much nearer than was anticipated, and the ship was driving heavily to leeward. At once the Captain wore ship and made sail to try and get off, but he could not work her to windward. All our friends were on deck, and it needed no words to tell that there was imminent danger. Edith was clinging to some ropes to steady herself, for the sea was running mountains high, and the *Montague* laboured as in a death-agony. Charles was by her side, and his strong arm supported her.

"Oh, Charles!" she said, and her face was ghastly pale, "this is fearful. We are lost! we are lost!"

"Nay, Edith, my darling, that cannot be while our Father's eye is upon us. Be calm, dear one, be firm; there is danger, but let us use our strength, and trust His strength, and all will be well."

Terror was written in every face in some form or another, save one. Bob Amesbury stood alone, with his hand grasping the taffrail, and his eye fixed on the land. The colour was still in his cheeks, his lips were parted by a smile, his eyes sparkled with the lustre of former days. His cap had been carried away with the wind, and his curly locks were blown about by the tempest, yet he smoothed them down with his disengaged hand as calmly as though a little child had playfully disturbed them.

Even in that moment of excitement,—for seeing that it was impossible to round the points of the Bay in which they found themselves, orders had been given to let go the small bower-anchor,—Charles could not help being struck with Bob's calm and placid appearance.

"Look, at Bob, Edith," he said, "he really seems to be enjoying the scene."

"Ah, he has not so many lives bound up in his as we have, Charles."

"But life is as dear to him as to us."

"God grant that his and ours may be preserved."

As they spoke, Captain Roe came up to them. There was desperation written in his face, but he was

as cool and collected as if he had been in a quiet drawing-room ; no tremor of the hand, or quiver of the lip, no gesture of impatience or haste.

“Is there hope, Captain ; will that anchor hold ?” asked Edith, imploringly.

“Hope ! yes, Edith, always hope ; and the anchor may hold, but if it slips we have another. God rules the raging of the storm. Keep up a good heart, my child ; be a true, courageous woman, and let those who cannot work, *pray*.”

There was need of prayer, for as the waves dashed against the vessel's side, and fell in masses upon the deck, the windlass gave way under the strain,—the anchor was gone !

There was a cry of anguish and horror from Edith, faint but deep. Charles held her tightly to his manly breast and hushed the cry, and tried to rouse her with his hopeful words. Edward, who had been working with the men, now joined them, and though his voice faltered, and his whole frame shook like an aspen, he whispered hope, and strove to cheer with words of comfort.

Again all was activity, and there was work for every one to do. The second anchor was prepared,

and let go. Edward joined the hands in their labour; Bob, in obedience to an order from the Captain, cut away the life-buoys from the stern, and placed them on the companion-stairs, so that they might be ready in case anyone should be washed overboard. Charles still stood beside Edith, he dared not, could not leave her; undivided in their lives, they should be undivided in death.

The anchor held, but the rolling waves were sweeping over the deck, and soon it became evident that it dragged, and the *Montague* was drifting towards the rocks.

Captain Roe bounded on the poop-deck, still calm and fearless, inspiring hope and courage in his men.

"Nothing can save the ship," he cried in his loudest voice, which was faint amid the roar of the tempest; "but God may yet save us. I command from every soul on board implicit obedience!"

"Aye, aye, Sir," sounded from the decks.

"Edith,—Charles,—I expect the same from you, it is your only hope."

Orders were now rung out to make the sails ready for setting,—there was no alternative but to run the *Montague* on shore. His attempt was to run her on

the beach, but the ship got among the rollers and would not steer. There was then but one resource to prevent her being dashed to pieces broadside on the rocks. It was to make sail, put her before the wind, and run her stem on to the nearest point.

A moment or two before the vessel struck, Bob came up to where Charles and Edith stood. His coat and waistcoat were off, the lead line was round his waist.

"Pray for success; God bless you! God preserve you!" he said—grasping a hand of each—and he was gone.

"Bob, don't attempt it unless you are sure of your strength," said the Captain, soon after the ship had struck. "Here are other volunteers."

"Never fear for me, Captain, shake hands."

Captain Roe grasped his hand, and watched him eagerly as he lowered himself into the water by the martingale of the ship. Life and death hung upon his endeavours. Manfully he battled with the angry waves; every stroke of the strong swimmer was a struggle for life. He reached the shore, but a cry rose above the howl of the storm; he had struck against the rocks. Still he persevered! Clinging to the

rock and drawing the rope after him, he attached it to a large boulder on the shore. But hardly was the communication made, than he was seen to stagger and fall, and a receding wave drew him forth into the angry surf. Instantly the buoys were thrown out, and every effort made to save him as he came floating towards the vessel. Many a tear fell as his body was dragged on deck. His eyes were fixed and glassy, his mouth was open, his body was motionless, his shirt was red with blood. But no time was to be lost, the preparations for Edith to leave the vessel were made, Edward had already passed along the line followed by a strong seaman, and they were on the shore ready to receive and rescue from the dashing waters those who should follow. Just as she was about to mount the vessel's side, the body of Bob Amesbury was being borne to the forecastle. She took the cold lifeless hand, and clasped it in her own, and then with a pure sisterly affection, imprinted on his noble brow a holy kiss, and let her tears fall unrestrained upon his cheek.

"Farewell, Bob, my friend, my brother!" murmured Charles, with broken voice, laying his hand on the heart which had ceased to beat. "Come, Edith,

courage! Now lend me your hand." It was a perilous descent,—a false movement would have been death,—and it needed almost superhuman strength to accomplish it. A cry of joy rang from many voices even amid the terror of their own position, as they witnessed their arrival on shore in safety.

Not a moment was to be lost, already the rope was chafing, and the strain upon it as the vessel lurched, threatened to part it. One after another passed along that awful bridge, and tremendous was the work of those on shore, to save the men as they neared it, and rescue them from the waves.

In this way all left the ship but the Captain; he was still there, cool and collected, and had fearlessly superintended the departure of the others. Then He went to the fore-castle and knelt down beside the lifeless body of Bob; anxiously he felt the pulse and laid his hand upon his heart, shouted into his ear, raised the heavy eye-lid, and gazed into the glassy eyes. There was no doubt,—no ray of hope left,—life was gone. To bear that dead weight across the rope was an impossibility, the strongest had only sufficient strength to convey themselves across; there was no alternative but to leave the earthly remains of poor Bob

there until the vessel should break up, and they should be washed ashore.

Was it weakness in Captain Roe, that he cried like a child as he pressed the hand of Bob, and sobbed farewell, as a father mourneth for his son? No, that true heart bled with a manly sympathy and love; and could he have sacrificed his own life to have restored life to that courageous youth who had been their preserver in those fearful dangers, he would have done it. Oh! that such tears may be shed over our grave!

The anxious cry of voices from the shore, roused the Captain. The rope was terribly chafed, some strands had parted, in a few moments more it would break. Satisfying himself that he was the only remaining man on board, he then went down the rope, the motion of the ship dipping him several times into the water, and causing him to strike against the rocks. Exhausted and unconscious, he was received into the strong arms of his men, and laid upon the beach, just as a heavy lurch parted the rope, and cut off all further communication with the ship.

The place where the wreck had happened was a wild spot, and totally uninhabited. There was no

European settlement within many miles, nor did it appear that any natives dwelt upon that lonely shore. Some of the sailors immediately they recovered from their exhaustion, collected a heap of dry wood, and with the assistance of some dry fern which they were fortunate enough to find, succeeded in lighting a fire, which besides keeping them warm through the night, might perchance attract the natives to their help. And then a sheltered spot under an overhanging rock having been found, the company sat round in groups, while others more exhausted lay down. Edith held her hands to her eyes, she could not bear to see the *Montague* breaking up, she dare not turn her gaze to that wild scene, where it seemed, "the prince of the power of the air," was triumphing in conquest. All were sad and dispirited; the joy of thankfulness for preservation had not yet come. Charles seemed more than any of the rest to realize the scene, and he strove to cheer up the others, and animate them with courage and gratitude.

"My friends," he cried, and even beneath the refuge of that rock, he had to speak at the top of his voice to make himself heard above the tempest's howl, "our first duty is to thank

God for saving us, and to acknowledge His providence and love."

Kneeling on a ledge of rock, and followed in this act by every one who had strength to kneel, he poured out a song in the night, of gratitude to Him who had heard their cry from the depths, and had saved them.

He was arrested in his prayer by a piercing shriek from Edith.

"Oh! save him! save him!" she cried.

Every eye was turned on her, but she had started up, and was pointing to the ship, and immediately every eye was strained in that direction.

"Save who, Edith?" asked Charles, almost mechanically, a dreadful thought that the scenes through which she had passed had overturned the throne of reason, flashing upon him.

"Bob Amesbury! I saw him: Oh! save him! save him!" and shuddering, as she sank upon the ground, she buried her face in her lap.

In a moment there was a rush to the water's edge; every voice was raised, and that of the Captain rang loud and clear above them all. "Bob! Bob Amesbury!"

But there was nothing to be seen on board, save the rolling spars, the drifting *débris*, and the rushing waters which swept over all.

For some moments they all stood breathless and intent, gazing with a fixed earnest gaze.

"Captain, what does it mean," asked Charles at length, "has Edith lost——"

"No, no, it is true, too true. Oh! God help us, look, look!"

A cheer broke from the men,—if that cry of fear and horror, and recognition, could be called a cheer. Bob Amesbury had crawled on deck, and was leaning over the rails!

The tide was high, a hundred and fifty yards of boiling surf tossed between the wreck and the shore; all communication with the ship was cut off; and not a rope or a buoy, or any means of communication, was within the reach of those on shore; any attempt to battle with those fierce waves would have been sure and certain death. There were fragments of the broken boats, and fragments of the spars, splintered into small pieces on the beach, but they were useless.

"Lash yourself to the rigging!" shouted the

Captain, and the others made signs to him, in case the words should not reach his ear.

“Take courage Bob, hold on, the tide will soon begin to turn !” shouted Charles.

Whether the words were heard, or whether it was but a return of recognition, Bob waved his hand. Again and again, the cry was repeated. “Lash yourself to the rigging !” but faint from exhaustion, and fearing to loose his grasp of the rail, he still kept to his position.

“Captain, what can be done ? is there nothing you can think of to save him ?” asked Charles, as he frantically paced up and down.

“God alone can send deliverance, Charles, there is nothing we can do,” was the sad and gloomy answer.

A fearful gust swept over the sea ; the mainmast gave way, and fell with a heavy crash. Bob looked round upon the scene of devastation ; to remain where he was, would be death ; with a painful effort he moved away, and after much exertion succeeded in getting into the main rigging and securing himself there.

Another cheer, a hearty one this time, told him how his movements had been watched.

Again the Captain raised his voice.—“Hold on

Bob, lash yourself; another hour and the tide will have lowered. Can you hear ?”

There was a moments lull, and faintly Bob's reply was borne to the anxiously intent listeners.

“Yes ! I cannot lash myself,—I cannot hold long. God's will be done !”

His voice was almost inaudible amid the roar, but everyone caught that last sentence, “God's will be done;” it seemed to mingle with the moan of the tempest, and fall on their ear like a voice from another world.

Terrible was the suspense; it was almost more than human hearts could bear, the leaden moments lingered with fatal ease; every wave seemed to increase rather than diminish the distance.

Edith and her attendant, almost frenzied in their distress, had dragged themselves down to the beach.

For a few moments, all stood in silent despair; and then, falling on their knees, with hands outstretched to heaven, every heart poured forth its supplication to the God of mercy. The action was seen by Bob; he too raised his hands in prayer.

It was his last action. A fearful sea broke over

the ship, tearing away the rigging, and carrying him with awful speed into the raging billows.

‘ * * * *

After that night of weeping came a morning without clouds. The sun rose in dazzling lustre; the mists were all scattered, the fury of the storm was spent. There lay the *Montague* upon the rocks, completely cut in half, with decks crushed in, and ribs exposed. All along the beach, fragments of the wreck and cargo were strewed in wild disorder. And there a sad group was bending over a lifeless form,— gently bearing it to a resting place beneath the shadow of a rock. Beautiful in death, bearing the smile with which the spirit commended itself into the hands of God still impressed on the features, and the lips half open, as if uttering their last words, God’s will was done!

A steamer had passed during the night, news of the wreck had reached the European settlement not many miles distant, and as soon as the first streaks of day glanced upon the earth, every pathway leading to the scene of disaster was thronged with people eager to render assistance. Thankfully Charles accepted the offer of a clergyman whose house was near at hand,

to claim his hospitality, and while the settlers were coming in throngs to the spot, he in company with Edward and Edith drove away to his house. Shortly afterwards the Captain followed them, in company with his men, who would not entrust to strangers' hands the mournful task of bearing the remains of poor Bob.

Three days later and the village was crowded with people from all parts of the country. The bell was mournfully tolling, and many hearts were full of grief. Borne to the grave by those whom he had rescued from death; wept over by those who had been to him more than friends and kinsfolk, Bob Amesbury was laid to rest in that little village churchyard. There on the hill slope, beneath the snow capp'd mountains, where the rimu and willow wave and rustle with the sea breeze, and the mountain rill sings its ceaseless lullaby, he sleeps. And on his resting-place, a snow-white tablet tells his mournful tale. Mournful, and yet not mournful. "HE doeth all things well," and Bob's last words still speak from that tablet, "God's will be done."

Chapter XV.



" It is not in the mountains,
Nor the palaces of pride,
That love will fold his wings up,
And rejoicingly abide :
But in meek and humble natures
His home is ever found ;
As the lark that sings in heaven
Builds its nest upon the ground ! "

BLANCHARD.

" And there is not a heart on earth
That loves, but shall be loved again ;
Some other heart hath kindred birth,
And aches with all the same sweet pain. "

MASSEY.

Beetlebrow's Visit to Eyalip.

FAIR winds and a good ship had borne Beetlebrow across the seas ; and without much adventure, apart from the ever varying incidents of sea life, he had reached the shores of Old England. Beetlebrow was no lawyer, and had it not been for the introductions which Captain Roe had given him, he would undoubtedly have fallen among thieves. If anybody had argued with him that he was *not* the rightful heir he would have felt a weight taken off his mind, and would have no more thought of establishing his title to the property, with the chance of keeping anybody else out of it, than he would have thought of attempting to establish his title to the throne. But Bill's lawyer was an honest man, and all difficulties and unnecessary troubles and expenses were spared him. Identity was established ; all the

formalities were duly gone through, and in a few months after his arrival he had the satisfaction of knowing that the business was completed; and the greater satisfaction of receiving the property, which turned out to be considerably more than he had anticipated. Many a time while the business was pending, he had gone to the old village where he had spent his young days, and visited that grave which was the most hallowed spot in all the world to him. But he had only once been to Ryslip, and then his visit was short and somewhat formal; but having been pressed by some of Mr. Harvey's old neighbours to visit them again, and Aunt Esther having extorted a promise that he would at least spend some days there before he returned to Australia, Beetlebrow, on the completion of his business, started off to fulfil his promise.

The Ryslip folks were homely, comfortable sort of people, and Beetlebrow soon got to like them. He was looked upon as one of the great wonders of the age for his history's sake, and as he had been with Mr. Harvey at the time of his death, and the name of Harvey was dear to every heart in the village, he was welcome wherever he went. And

so it happened, that six months after he went to Ryslip to pay his few days' visit he was still there. Upon him had devolved the task of breaking the terrible news to Mrs. Lennett of the fate of her son: he had been the sharer and soother of her grief, and he had sought to teach her not to sorrow as those who have no hope. It was a hard blow to her; self-reproach nearly broke her heart, and it was long—very long—before she could echo her son's last words. Beetlebrow never hinted to a soul in the village the faintest word about Bob's secret, but he heard many things which he locked in his own heart.

Of all those whom Beetlebrow visited there was none whose society had such a charm for him as Aunt Esther's. She had tried in vain to live away from Ryslip; but there were so many associations dear to her, that she resolved as soon as "a door was opened" to settle down there. That door was not long in opening. A woman in the village—Farmer Haycroft's widow—died, and left two orphan children, a boy and a girl, alone in the world. Aunt Esther had known and nursed the poor woman's husband, and had closed his eyes when he died, commending his children to her care with his last breath. And so, as

Providence gave her this charge of looking after the children, she took a cottage in Ryslip, and there Beetlebrow was a visitor.

It was one Sunday afternoon, about six months after Beetlebrow had been in the village, that he and Aunt Esther sat together and chatted, while a comfortable fire blazed cheerfully upon the hearth. The children had gone to Sunday School; the neighbours were singularly free from rheumatics and other ailments, and Aunt Esther had no calls of duty to take her out.

"Powerful sermon this morning, Mrs. Curtis," said Beetlebrow, as he leaned back in the arm-chair, and put up his hand to screen the fire from his face.

"Aye, Mr. Beetlebrow, you're right. And what a blessed thing it is that the Almighty has sent such a minister as Mr. Woodbridge to preach the Word to us. He always finds something in the Scriptures that nobody else would think of finding, and seems a'most to have the keys of the kingdom, and able to bring out treasures after treasures to feed the soul. But if the treasures are so wonderful that he brings out, how much more wonderful must be the book where they are all stored away!"

"Yes, that's true enough, the Book's like the sea, got a'most something of everything in it—great truths and little truths—a word in season for all on us at all times. I wish I know'd more about the Book; somehow I seem to be going back instead of growin' in grace. I seems to miss Mast'r Charles so much. We used to worship at the same place pretty often, and I allers liked the sermint uncommon, but to hear Mast'r Charles talk about it arterwards was ever so much better. Next to you, Mrs. Curtis, he know'd more o' the Scripturs than any one as ever I met, and he used to be able to let out so easy like."

"It's little enough I know, Mr. Beetlebrow, of that Word," Aunt Esther answered, "and I can but poorly talk about what I know. But we've had some pleasant talks about it, Mr. Beetlebrow."

"Aye, that we have, and please God we shall have many more. And yet I don't know," he continued, and he looked hard at the fire as he spoke, "I ain't sure as I'm doin' right in bein' here. I was thinking on'y this morning about that word, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' and I didn't know what to say to it, Mrs. Curtis; it got over me, and I'm a thinking the reason I feel meself a-going back is because I'm

enjoying meself, and not 'tending to the Master's work as I should."

"But you can work for Him here; His vineyard is all over the world, and He wants labourers everywhere."

"Yes, but He wants one lab'rer to 'tend to one work, and one to another, and ev'ry one in his own place. And He made me a seaman, leastways His providence ordered it so as I should be, and now His providence has given me work to do amongst seamen; and I feel I must do it, Mrs. Curtis, and not be wasting His time and opportunities."

Aunt Esther was not the one to say a word in opposition to any course Providence might mark out. So she made no comment to Beetlebrow's remark but sat very still, and presently she sighed.

"I'm sorry I'm goin' away from Ryslip, I take to the place wonderful, and should like a snug little berth here uncommon."

"Ryslip will be sorry to lose you," said Aunt Esther; "you seem to have settled down so amongst us. I needn't tell you I shall be very sorry you're going, and like those of old I shall sorrow most of all because I shall see your face no more."

"Wasn't those the people as 'companied Paul to the ship?" asked Beetlebrow.

"Yes, the Ephesians."

"Mrs. Curtis," said Beetlebrow very slowly, jerking out the sentence word by word, "don't you think you'd see your way clear to 'companying me to the ship, and going along wi' me to the other side of the world? Then you needn't sorrow because you'd see my face no more; but we two could live for one another, and work together for the good Master as has worked for us."

Aunt Esther was only a woman, and not accustomed to such overtures. She could not reply; but rather hastily drawing aside her snow-white apron to get at her pocket, she pulled out her handkerchief.

"La! Mr. Beetlebrow!"

"Mrs. Curtis, I ain't joking; tain't the day and tain't the time to joke. I've bin a-thinking a longful time that it 'ud be a great mercy to have some'un as 'ud be a good wife and a good friend, and be what Eve was to Adam in the good old times, 'a help-meet.' And ever since I first seen you I thought, 'Well, if it's the Lord's will as I should ever marry, I hope it'll be som'un like Mrs. Curtis, one as fears

the Lord, and knows how to be cheerful and happy, an' could teach me to make out more o' the blessed Book, and could help me use the Lord's money as He has lent me.' And I think it was Providence as brought me to Ryslip and to you, Mrs. Curtis."

• Still Aunt Esther spoke not, but she looked up into Beetlebrow's face, and that encouraged him to go on.

" We ain't young, Mrs. Curtis, neither of us, and it wouldn't do for you to be a'most alone like in the world when old age comes on ; and those two children as they grows up will want som'un to look arter 'em as well as you, Mrs. Curtis. And I ain't a young man, Mrs. Curtis ; and now the Lord has blessed me, I should like to share the blessin' with one as I loved, and I do love you, Mrs. Curtis—Esther!—for your own sake, and for the Lord's sake, and for Mast'r Charles' sake ! "

Aunt Esther's face beamed with a happy, tranquil smile, and her eye glistened with a joyful tear ; and when Beetlebrow moved his chair nearer her's, and stroked her hand as it rested on the table, then waxing more confident took it in his own and held it there, she did not resist the movement.

"I'm only a poor seaman, Mrs. Curtis; I ain't a scholar, I ain't no match for you in learning, and it ain't much as I can offer you. But I can say I'll be a true husband to you, and love you till death us do part; I'll try and make you as happy a home as ever I can, and if the Lord bless us, as He will, I think you'll be happy. You'll have heaps o' chances of doing good; you can teach me, Esther, for it's mighty little as I know, and—"

Beetlebrow stopped, his heart was full, but it could not run over in words.

"Speak up, Esther, it's only me and the Master as orders these things aright, 'll hear you. What does your heart tell you to say?"

"Beetlebrow, I never thought to see this day," said Aunt Esther, "I never thought to hear this from you; I don't know what to say except that I shall never marry unless I marry you. I think I see the Lord's hand in it, and I—"

She paused, and opening the Bible which lay upon the table, she read solemnly and softly, while Beetlebrow looked over her shoulder, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be

buried ; the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

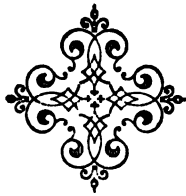
" Amen," said Beetlebrow, " and may God bless us in what we have done !" And printing on her cheek a holy kiss, the sacrament of betrothal was completed.

* * * *

The bells which had rung out their merry peals from the old Ryslip steeple on the examination day, when Charles so greatly distinguished himself, and had since celebrated so many occasions grave and gay, never rung with a more cheery sound than on the morning, three months after the Sunday afternoon chat, when Beetlebrow led Aunt Esther to the altar. All the village loved them, and so all the village went to see them married. Mr. Woodbridge's voice was tremulous with emotion as he read the service, and Mr. Strangelore, whose heart beat with a genuine love and respect under his large white waistcoat, more than once pretended his spectacles were dusty and that some of it had got into his eyes.

The Ryslip schoolboys—for whom Beetlebrow had secured a day's holiday and had provided a substantial banquet, as a mark of respect for the associations

with which "Mast'r Charles" was linked—never raised a heartier cheer than when Mr. and Mrs. Antliff came from the church. It was a joyous, happy, day for everybody, and Mr. Strangelore said to Mr. Woodbridge as they walked along, what everybody in the place had said in heart, "If ever a marriage was made in heaven, this one was."



Chapter XVI.



" After long storms and tempests overblowne,
The sun at length his joyous face doth cleare ;
So, when as fortune all her spight hath showne,
Some blissful houres at last must needs appeare,
Else would afflicted wights oft times despeire."

SPENCER.

" O rest ye, brother mariners,
We will not wander more."

TENNYSON.

Diary of Rest.

TWO years have passed away since that fearful night when the *Montague* finished her career—years full of the trifles which are almost unheeded in the present, but which, looked back upon, are seen as wonderful developments of life. There is nothing little in life; the daily routine of duty; the silent hours of meditation; the sunshine of the soul; the clouds of passing sorrow; all these are the hard working agents which mould the character and mind into perfect being. The casual conversation, or the birth of a new thought, has a history whose beginning comprehends all time; and every life has more in it than would engage the whole of another life to chronicle. Briefly, therefore, we must epitomise the events of the two years.

The visit to New Zealand had been one of sorrow;

there was a vacancy in the heart of Charles, which even the love of Edith could not fill :—

“ Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than heaven,”

and there is a soul in friendship which is eternal as Love itself.

Charles mourned for Bob as friend only mourns for friend. “ I am distressed for thee, my brother ; very pleasant hast thou been unto me ; thy love to me was wonderful.” Friend in his joys and sorrows, sharer in his ambition, and companion of all his young desires, he missed Bob. There seemed a voice wanting in the very harmony of nature—a withered field even in the Eden of thought ; a cloud across the glory of the firmament. His heart had bled in the struggle of parting, and it was long before the scar knew the “ healing of time.” It was only as he thought upon the eternity of friendship and felt the communion of spirit which dwellers on earth may share with dwellers in heaven, that the reality of death was merged into the higher reality of undying life ; and often as he wandered in thought to Bob’s quiet resting-place, and communed with their united thoughts of former days, sighing over shadows of

darkness, and rejoicing over beams of light, he felt his friend being dead yet spake; and the voice was instructive. It led him to look upon the objects of life from even a higher point of view than he had been wont, and he determined, in the strength of Omnipotence, to be more than ever watchful in seeking to make every friendship and every relationship of life influential.

There was one benefit derived from the visit to New Zealand, one event to look back upon with unmingled pleasure. A friendship warm and hearty sprung up between Charles and Captain Roe's son, a genial young man, as like his father in temperament and disposition as could well be. From the descriptions of each other which Captain Roe had been the medium of conveying to them, they at once fell into the places which events had prepared, and being both frank and honest in speech, they were on the first day of meeting as intimate as if they had been cradled together in infancy, and were really both sons of the Captain. The strange circumstances too, under which they met—excited by the wildness of adventure, solemnized by the nearness of death, startled into the midst of realities from dreams of pleasure— all tended

to produce very great closeness of friendship. And Alfred Roe was essentially qualified to administer comfort; an active, thoroughly business-like young man, with energy which it became a labour to control, he never wearied in working out means of consolation, although he had little aptitude to console by words. When the time came for leaving New Zealand, Charles felt a reluctance at parting with him, which is rarely felt after an acquaintance of only a few weeks. Let it not be imagined that Alfred Roe was ever destined to fill up the void which the absence of Bob had occasioned in the heart of Charles. That would have been an impossibility. If we are large hearted, we may have room for two or more friends, but one cannot displace another, for a share in our affections is for ever claimed by the one to whom it belongs as a right, and neither distance nor circumstances, nor time nor eternity can affect it.

Edith was very glad when the time came to bid farewell to New Zealand; she had suffered much from the intense mental strain which the incidents of the wreck had occasioned; she sympathised with a true womanly sympathy with Charles, and felt anxious for

him to return to his old pursuits, which would fully restore peace of mind.

Captain Roe, had it not been for the very pressing entreaty of his son, would have left the island the moment arrangements for the sale of the wreck were completed. New Zealand had no charms for him ; its very attractions, which had made him plan the excursion with so much pleasure, were worse than tame to him ; its wild and rugged sceneries only reminded him of that rocky coast where lay the remains of his good ship *Montague*. And he had loved the *Montague* with that reverential love which dear association claims. There are spots sacred to memories of the past, where long-hushed voices speak again, and old feelings rise from their graves—where every material object has a soul. That ship had long been the Captain's home. It was on board her that he had spent many of his best years ; there he had mourned over the loss of the partner of his life ; there he had found a son in the person of Charles Harvey ; there he had found life and peace. Bitterly, though needlessly, he reproached himself for having undertaken that last journey ; he had very much admired Bob Amesbury, and he reproached himself as the unwilling and

indirect cause of his death. He condemned himself for having allowed him to risk his life even for the general safety, although he knew any protest would have been in vain, and he bitterly accused himself for not having carried him across the rope when the vessel was in communication with the shore, although he felt it would have been an impossibility, and at the time there was not the shadow of a doubt in his own mind, or that of his crew, that Bob was dead. He was mortified that his last voyage should have been a failure accompanied with disasters which had never happened on any voyage he had hitherto made. No wonder he felt glad to quit the scene of so many sorrows, and seek in the pleasures of his new undertaking to blot out the unhappy recollections.

Edward Marston, more than any of the friends of Bob—save Charles—was affected by his death, and the peculiarly touching circumstances under which it occurred. They had been very intimate, brothers in all things, and inseparable companions during their stay together in Australia. Never had Edward been known to be so gloomy, even Edith entirely failed to rouse him, nor did she altogether regret her failure, for her brother's mind was filled with very solemn

thoughts. The solemnity of death made him think of the reality of life, and its awful responsibilities. He tried to trace *his* influence upon the mind of Bob, and the effort did not bring satisfaction. Conversations which they had had together during the happy days of the recent voyage, came to mind with intense force, and words seemed to be borne to him with voices from the unseen world. He thought of Bob thinking, acting, speaking in the world of spirits, and wondered how the thoughts and feelings of the past could be harmonized with them. And thus in the mysterious orderings of Him who causeth the light to shine out of darkness, and evil to be the parent of good, he was led through the pathway of death, into the Way of Life.

* * * *

The firm of Roe, Harvey & Co. commenced operations almost immediately after the return from New Zealand, and during the two years which have rolled away they have had abundant proofs that the plans they formed on board the *Montague* were wise and judicious. Every fresh season has brought an increase of business, and every undertaking fresh energy to undertake more. It is quite needless to say that Captain Roe and his son work well together. A

common interest and a common desire to promote the welfare of each other has brought them into success, and while they both work with hearty goodwill, they mutually enjoy the fruits of their labour.

Edward Marston has reached the goal of that ambition which stirred him when he left his native land. He has made a home for his mother and sisters, and they are again united under the same roof. And a happier household breathes not in Australia. Surrounded with friends—the Hendersons and Captain Roe, and two other homes, into one of which we shall presently take a peep, all within a stone's-throw of one another—the stream of life runs gaily along, singing its thankful praise as it goes.

* * * *

Jasmine and roses climbed together over the porch leading into a well-stocked and tastefully cultivated garden, and Edith was plucking a nosegay and arranging it in order. Merrily she sang a fragment of song, and then playfully mimicked the notes of a pet bird which had been trying to imitate her. But every moment she stopped and listened with a joyful expectancy, until at length a rap at the door announced an arrival. Springing away, she hurried

to the door, and in a moment more was in the arms of Charles. Silly creatures! they had only been separated three or four hours at the most, and the eager joy of welcome would give the impression they had not seen each other for ages.

“Edith, my love, I’ve got a surprise for you,” said Charles, as she led him away to the garden to see the result of the day’s labours; “something is going to happen this evening out of the common way.”

“What is it Charley?—Captain Roe coming to dinner? But that’s nothing out of the common way. I’ll give it up.”

“No, that’s not fair, guess again.”

“Somebody sent another wedding-present?”

“You covetous wife! when your house is full of them too. No, even better than that.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Wilton have decided to come and stay a day or two with us?”

“No, you are not near it yet, birdie. Try again.”

“Edward is engaged at last to Fanny Grant?”

“No, I think it will come to that soon; but that is not the present point.”

“Then I can’t guess, Charley. Help me a little, now, do; just a hint, and then I shall guess it.”

"Well then, put on your bonnet, and come with me to see Mr. Edwards, the landlord of that pretty cottage; the one we looked over, you know, before we took this."

"Charles, what do you mean? what can you want with another house? who is coming? I know, I know!" cried Edith, after a moment's thought; "dear old Beetlebrow is back again!"

"Yes, and married too! I have just had the intelligence; they were signalled this morning. Their ship is out in the harbour, and they will come ashore with this evening's tide."

"Oh! I'm so delighted! And who is Mrs. Beetlebrow? I wonder what she is like; what a queer thing for Beetlebrow to marry. But we both thought he would; don't you see now what those mysterious sayings meant in his last letters? I'm delighted!"

"So am I, but come along, Edy, I have set my mind upon Beetlebrow having that cottage, and if we see about it for him in time, and tell him he can have it at once, depend upon it he will like it."

"I hope so, and I know I shall like his wife, because she is sure to be like Beetlebrow; and anything after his stamp is good and refreshing."

Hastily putting on her bonnet,—O ! rare virtue !—Mr. and Mrs. Harvey sallied forth. After a few enquiries, they found there would be no difficulty whatever in securing the refusal of the house as it was still to let. And then chatting gaily over the events of the day, they were returning to their house to dine, and wait patiently for evening to come and bring its welcome visitors, when a lad very much out of breath stopped them.

“Please, Sir, Captain Roe sent me after you, Sir, to say you must look sharp, Sir, as your friends from England have come ashore in the pilot-boat.”

“Then they will be at home before we can get there to receive them !” exclaimed Edith ; “Captain is sure to bring them up as quickly as possible. Let us hasten on !”

They did go, and found that the surmise had come true ; sure enough, as they reached the house they heard a deep Ha ! ha ! which could not be mistaken, and there in the doorway stood Bill Beetlebrow and the Captain.

Never was welcome more hearty. Beetlebrow knew not how to find terms to express what he had to say, and was obliged to resort to pantomime. None

of them seemed to know how to make enough of one another.

Already the news had reached Beetlebrow of Charles's marriage, although it had been intended to keep the matter a profound secret, to be discovered in surprise. And names puzzled him. He could not think of calling the late Miss Marston, Edith, he had never taken such a liberty as that; as for the new name of Mrs. Harvey it never once entered his head. No name was so familiar to him as "Mast'r Charles," and it was not unnatural, therefore, that Beetlebrow should call her Mrs. Charles.

"But, Beetlebrow, what have you done with *your* wife?" asked Edith; "we are longing to see and welcome her."

"The old 'oman's gone up stairs to take off her things, Mrs. Charles, but she'll be down in a minnit, and then I'll interduce her. She's one in a thousand, Mast'r Charles," said Beetlebrow aside; "there, it ain't for me to make remarks, but she's just as much the wife for me as Miss Edith is the wife for you; not as I mean to make comparisons, but you see what I mean. Lor! Mast'r Charles, you should only jest hear her read the Word, or take a

spell at talking on't! it 'ud do yer heart good, it's wonderful! She's got the keys o' the kingdom in a sense, Mast'r Charles, if ever any 'oman had."

"And here she comes, I expect," said Charles, as the rustle of a silk dress on the stairs attracted their attention, and there, sure enough, was a middle-aged lady, dressed in a neat black silk gown and a white muslin apron, and white cap and neckerchief.

A moment of fixed gaze, an exclamation of surprise, a bound forward, and Charles Harvey was in the arms of Beetlebrow's wife!

Edith stood transfixed, and no wonder; perhaps, reader, you would have done the same if you had only been married two months; while Beetlebrow fairly roared a duet of Ha! ha's! with the Captain.

"Don't 'ee mind him, Miss—that is, Mrs. Charles—don't mind him," said Beetlebrow between the convulsions; "it's only my wife, and she's Mast'r Charles's—"

"Dear old Aunt Esther!" said Charles, catching Beetlebrow's explanatory remarks to Edith. "Here, Edith, come and welcome Aunt Esther! I know you'll love her; you do love her already for her own sake, and for Beetlebrow's, and for mine. Ah!

Beetlebrow, you sly fellow!" he added, digging him in the ribs, "you've got a treasure half the world might covet. I wish you both joy from my heart—you are sure to have it, and so are we."

"And God be thanked for bringing us all together," responded Aunt Esther.

It was next to impossible to get anything like five minutes' connected talk all the evening. Old recollections of Charley's boyish days flooded the memory of Aunt Esther, and every incident narrated had such a charm for Edith that she incited her to fresh descriptions; until, as memory awakened memory, and Charles poured out questions about places and people, she became perfectly bewildered in the catalogue of names.

It was not until the following evening that Charles managed to secure a quiet hour for a cozy chat with Beetlebrow, while Edith was busy with Aunt Esther and her adopted children, who had come ashore during the day.

"Well, Beetlebrow," he said, as they sat together in their easy chairs beside the garden window, "you are a fortunate and happy man. I do congratulate you from my heart."

“And I do thank yer, Mast’r Charles, from the bottomest parts o’ my heart. All as I am and all as I have has come to me through you. Lor ! what a wonderful voyage that was, now we come to look back on’t, when we came out in the *Montague*. It was the turning-point and flood-time of all our lives, and it was the Master as honoured you and your Father to be the means of blessin’ us all. And He just has blessed us, Mast’r Charles, and given every one on us ’stounding proofs of His providence and mercy.”

“It is wonderful, Bill; and looking back on the good way in which He has led us, we can see how He has ordered events to enable us to be helpers and workers one with the other. A golden chain of providences seems to link together the lives of all of us who came out on that voyage.”

“There’s on’y one link broken, Mast’r Charles, and that one is poor Mr. Bob. I could ha’ wished, if it ha’ bin the Master’s will, that he should ha’ bin spared to us a bit longer. The place won’t seem quite the same old place to me now he arn’t here. But I do hope he was ready to go, Mast’r Charles; do you really think he was?”

"I do believe most truly that he was, Bill. If his death had happened a week before, we should have been left in very painful doubt; but during those last few days he was clearer in his thoughts, happier in his love and confidence, more trustful and believing, than ever I knew him to be before. *He* felt and knew that God had begun His own good work in him, and *we* know, Bill, He never begins that which he does not carry on to the end."

"Ah! that's true, Mast'r Charles," said Beetle-brow, "but it ain't allus that we can foller th' Almighty through all His ways. Sometimes He works in the dark like, and sometimes in the sunshine; and though we know He knows and allus does what's best, and though He don't allus let us know down here what His secrets is, we can trust Him, as my Missus says, where we can't trace Him, and we know He's settled it all right for Mr. Bob."

"Poor Bob!" said Charles with a deep sigh, "his was a chequered life, Bill, it was very merciful that he should be removed from the evil; there was that on his mind which would have oppressed him all through life, and have made existence a sad and bitter thing."

"Did you ever get to the bottom o' those strange meetin's, and the secret as worried poor Mr. Bob a'most out of his mind, Mast'r Charles? It ain't idle speech, and it ain't to rake up bygones 'gainst the departed makes me ask."

"Bill, I was going to ask you the very same question, because I thought that in your visit to Ryslip you would be sure to gather some hints which would explain the mystery. I will tell you in confidence what my worst suspicions are, and I hope I have not wronged my friend in entertaining them. When Bob was a boy at Mr. Strangelore's school he had a great antipathy to his half-brother, Samuel Lennett, and this antipathy grew into a settled hatred as years advanced. Bob was thwarted and cruelly used at home; advantages were withheld from him and given to his rival, and poor Bob was naturally of a hot, hasty temper, and could not brook injustice—that temper was the bane of his life! Before he came out to Australia he wrote to me, and related an incident which fastened itself singularly in my thoughts. Our old dog Rover, during one hot summer day, went mad, and the villagers, with sticks and fire-arms, went in pursuit. Bob had that morning been vexed

and irritated by both Mr. Lennett and his son, and a terrible temptation presented itself to revenge the insult. The dog passed between Bob and his tormentor, a fatal passion seized him, he raised his gun and was about to fire at Mr. Lennett, believing it would be accounted an accident, but '*he shot the cur instead.*' At least, so said the letter; but some time afterwards Aunt Esther wrote to me and mentioned the fact that Old Rover was still alive. I told this to Bob, and when he heard it he was extremely agitated, turned deadly pale, and left the room on the plea that he had received bad news. Bill, I fear poor Bob's secret was, that in that moment of unrestrained passion he really carried into execution the fearful thought which he admitted he entertained."

"Yes, Mast'r Charles," said Bill solemnly, "*it was so!* leastways, he shot young Lennett, and a crowner's 'quest was held, and the verdick was brought in as an accidental death. But, Mast'r Charles, there was three as saw that murder—for murder it was—the Great Bein' whose command was broken, and my Missus, who was passin' by, and that man as we was afeard to see Mr. Bob along with. That man taxed Mr. Bob with having shot young Lennett on

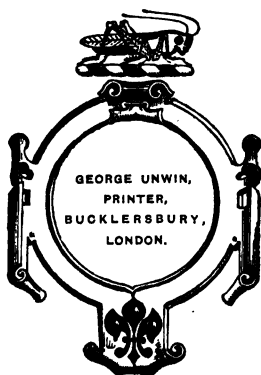
purpose, and Mr. Bob told him all, and so gave himself up to his power, and promised to work for him and get him money someway or other, as bribe not to peach on him. Well, Mast'r Charles, it isn't for us to talk about Mr. Bob—let bygones be bygones; it's God's mercy as makes us differ in our ways o' life, and we ain't without sin, and can't cast a stone at him. But there's one thing I can't get over, Mast'r Charles, and I ain't mentioned it to no one because it's our dooty to keep Mr. Bob's secret a secret, but what I can't get over is this—do you think, Sir, th' Almighty is a judge on the earth?"

"I hardly understand you, Beetlebrow," said Charles.

"Well, my Missus 'ud put together what I mean in two two's, but what I mean is, don't you think th' Almighty when He forgives us our sins for Jesus' sake, and pardons us in the world to come, yet He requires judgment out of us for some things?"

"You mean, I suppose, Bill, that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, and sometimes God gives this gift and yet gives the *wages* of sin too."

"That's the 'dential mark I wanted to hit at, Mast'r Charles."



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